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By Charlotte M. Braeme.

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A Modern Cinderella.

BY

CHARLOTTE M. BRAEME,

Author of "Dora Thorne."

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NEW YORK:
GEORGE MUNRO, PUBLISHER,
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A MODERN CINDERELLA.

CHAPTER I.

"I CAN tell you, my dear, that the letter has come none too soon—I could not possibly have carried on the campaign much longer. Your two daughters, Mrs. Harcourt, are very expensive young ladies."

"They are your daughters, Mr. Harcourt, and, if they are extravagant, take after yourself."

"We need not quarrel about it. You know my opinion—that if you dress them in gold and cover them with jewels, they will never be married."

"Why not?"

"Men are wary, my dear, and your daughters are shrewish, ill-tempered, vain—jealous of every pretty girl they see, and certainly not pretty themselves."

The lady's face flushed with indignation.

"You are pleased to be complimentary, sir!"

"Between ourselves, my dear, we may as well admit the truth. Those girls have bitterness enough in their composition to—well, sufficient for a hundred ordinary women; and they should be considered disagreeable ones. I have sense enough to see that."

"I am sure Mabel has a fine figure, and Jane sings most exquisitely."

"Certainly, I grant that; but, as I said before, there is no need for quarreling. Our troubles are over now, thank Heaven, and the good time has come."

"What does the letter say?" asked the lady.

"He has died at last, without a will. Mr. Treherne says there can be no doubt that he always intended me to succeed him, and the will, if there had been one, would have been made in my favor. As it is, you see—as heir-at-law—I take possession of everything."

"That is far better. Now there will be no nonsense about legacies to servants, which I always think a grave mistake. They are well paid for what they do; there is no need to increase their insolence by legacies and nonsense of that kind. What do you suppose the income will be?"

"I should say about seven thousand per annum," was the reply.

"I do hope, Mr. Harcourt, the very first thing you will do, mind, will be to give up all your poor relations; have no nonsense—do it at once."

"You may depend upon that," replied the husband. "I shall give the Hammonds a dead cut to-day."

"It would never do to have such people boasting that they knew Robert Harcourt, Esquire, of Weston Grange. I find poor relations are altogether a perfect mistake. I do not see the use of them—and anything that is perfectly useless," continued the lady, with irresistible logic, "ought not to exist."

Her amiable husband did not appear to have heard the last part of the sentence; he seldom listened to more than half of what his wife said.

This conversation took place in the drawing-room of one of the houses on the esplanade at Brighton, where Mr. and Mrs. Harcourt had taken apartments. The morning was lovely; the sea lay before them bright and sparkling; the waters blue, with a golden glint of sunshine; the sky clear and serene; the waves rolling in and breaking on the shore, singing the grand anthem first heard when God parted the waters from the dry land. The white sails of distant boats looked like beckoning fingers; but the beauty of earth, sky, and sea was a dead letter to the husband and wife, whose souls were sordid and whose dispositions matched. At that moment the door opened, and two young girls entered the room.

"We have news this morning, my dears," said Mrs. Harcourt, in a very inflated tone of voice; "your dear papa's cousin, John Beauchamp, of Weston Grange, is dead, and your papa succeeds him."

They had suffered many privations, this little family; they had been poor, and had known a thousand wants. One would have thought the first impulse of children who had known the struggles of their parents would have been to utter warm, loving congratulations—not so the Misses Harcourt.

"I hope to goodness," said Jane, the eldest, "that our dress will be the first thing attended to."

"Now I will have my revenge on Agatha Moore," said Mabel. "She is always boasting of their carriages, their horses, their money; she shall see that other people have money, too."

Not one word of thanks to Heaven; of gladness that their parents were freed from many cares; not one impulse of gratitude to the great God from whose hands all favors flow.

"Agatha Moore will be quite unworthy of any trouble, Mabel," said Mrs. Harcourt. "You will choose your friends from a superior class of people now."

"When shall we go to Weston?" inquired Jane.

"I thought of starting to-morrow," replied Mr. Harcourt. "You will have plenty to do, girls; you must get mourning—deep mourning, mind, with plenty of crape, for yourselves and mamma."

"Mourning does not suit me; I detest it," said Mabel. "How long must we wear that, papa?"

"As long as is customary," replied Mr. Harcourt. He took from the letter a check for a hundred pounds. "Mr. Treherne, knowing our limited circumstances, has very thoughtfully sent me this," he said; "so, girls, there is no need to limit yourselves in expense. Thank goodness, those trying times are over! Let your mourning be handsome."

"Handsome dresses do not make much difference to some people," said Mabel, who never for one moment forgot that she had a fine figure and her sister possessed no such advantage.

"There are many things far more admired than that," replied Jane, who felt herself personally attacked.

"My dear girls," interrupted Mrs. Harcourt, "there is surely no need for this kind of thing. Pray remember that in the circles where we shall move nothing is thought of but well-bred repose."

"I do not quite understand what Mr. Treherne means by this," continued Mr. Harcourt; "he says that we shall find an 'incumbrance' at the Grange, over which we must use our kindly discretion."

"Some old pensioner?" suggested Jane.

"Or perhaps a superannuated housekeeper? Papa, do not let us be annoyed with anything of that kind."

"Certainly not, Mabel. I can assure you that I intend keeping my cousin's fortune to myself; I do not see the force of sharing it with half a score of hangers-on."

"Was there no will of any kind made?" asked Mrs. Harcourt.

"Yes; one old one was found, dated long years ago, by which all the property was left to William Beauchamp, the younger brother; but he died first, as you perhaps remember."

The young ladies looked round the apartment with a contemptuous glance.

"I hope the Grange is large and well built," said Miss Mabel; "I am quite tired of small rooms."

"Have no fear, my dear, the Grange might be a castle; it is one of the finest old mansions in England."

"I do hope," said Jane, the younger, "that we shall be allowed to have a lady's-maid; the inconvenience we have suffered no one knows."

"You will have everything becoming to your state and fortune," said Mrs. Harcourt, proudly. "And now I think we had better see about our shopping at once."

"I hope, papa," said Mabel, "that when you pay the bill here you will let the landlady know of our change in fortune. I know for a fact that she said she did not believe we were real gentle-people; let her know to the contrary."

"I shall not forget," was the reply.

"She has looked down upon us," continued Miss Mabel, "because she thought we were poor. She will be ready to kiss the ground underneath our feet when she knows that we are rich."

"My dear Mabel, you express yourself too ungraciously—remember what I have said, 'repose of manner above everything else.'"

It would have been a rich treat for a cynic or a satirist to have accompanied the Misses Harcourt as they went shopping that day. Their grandeur of manner, the haughty expression of face, the sneering comments, the half-expressed opinion that nothing was good enough for them—the way in which they ordered about the assistants was something wonderful. They had the great pleasure, besides, of meeting, in the most fashionable shop, with their friend and rival, Agatha Moore, who was the only daughter and heiress of a wealthy corn-factor.

The way in which they talked about "county families" and persons in trade was most edifying. They spoke of their change of fortune as something they had always expected, and quite overwhelmed the corn-factor's heiress by their patronage and grandeur. Before this they had been maneuvering in every possible fashion for an invitation to visit Miss Moore at her father's house in London, and the good-natured heiress had almost obtained permission; but now, in what she imagined to be the highest bred and most fashionable manner, Miss Harcourt lamented that, in leaving Brighton, she must bid a long adieu to her friend. The heiress, all unsuspecting, replied that, on the contrary, she should hope to visit them, and to receive visits from them. Miss Harcourt repaid herself for all her envy, all her jealousy, all the many torments she had suffered through her friend's superior position, when she laughed and said:

"I am really sorry, but that can never be. We shall be compelled to take up a high position among the county people, and then, of course—you understand. Although we regret it, we can not associate with people in trade."

And with that parting shot, Miss Harcourt left the girl who had been really kind to her, and whose superior wealth had been her only fault.

CHAPTER II.

A FEW words of introduction to the amiable family whose fortunes we ask our readers to follow would not, perhaps, be out of place. Richard Harcourt was the cousin of John Beauchamp, the wealthy squire of Weston Grange. The Beauchamps were an old family, perhaps one of the oldest in England; they had no title, for the simple reason that, although they had been frequently offered one, they invariably refused it.

"No title can ennoble us," the proud old squire would say; "any man in these days may be a lord, no one could be Squire Beauchamp of Weston Grange. Not that I despise the title my country chooses for the reward of great men, but they could not ennoble me."

One after another the squires of Weston had succeeded each other, until John Beauchamp came into possession. He had one brother, younger than himself, William, who lived with him.

John Beauchamp married early in life a beautiful and talented lady, the youngest daughter of Lord Colville. He loved her with a strength and depth rarely known, and when his hopes were highest, when he was expecting an heir to his estates, he lost her. Mother and child died together. He was inconsolable for many years; he mourned as one who could not be comforted. During that time he made a will in his younger brother's favor, leaving all that he possessed to his brother and his children after him.

"For William," he used to say, "you must marry, or the old name will die out. Dearly as I love it, I can not marry to save it, because my heart is buried in my wife's grave; but you must marry. Never mind money, you will have more than enough of that; marry into a good old family, there is nothing like it."

But William did not obey his brother in all things; he fell in love, but it was to please himself; nor was it with the member of a good old family either, but with the penniless daughter of a poor school-master, who had but a beautiful face and a tender heart for her fortune.

"You can not do it, sir," said the elder brother, when the other one mentioned his love. "Ours is an old family, an ancient family, second to none; you can not bring a school-master's daughter into it. Remember, I forbid all thoughts of such a *mésalliance*."

And William seemed to yield to his brother; but in a few months afterward the whole neighborhood was astonished by hearing that the beautiful Rose Hampton had run away from home. It might have been thought suspicious that at the same time William Beauchamp went for a continental tour. If the old squire had any suspicions, he never gave utterance to them. William returned, and though he made long absences from the Grange, it was still his home.

One absence was longer than others, and when he returned he wore crape round his hat; but the squire never asked the reason why. He was at home six months, then told his brother he had business in Paris. He died there quite suddenly, and his body was brought to England for burial. Some few months after his funeral, a French nurse appeared, with a little child, at Weston Grange; she asked for an interview with the squire, and told him it was by his late brother's directions she acted.

"But my late brother, as you call him, was never married!" thundered the squire.

"I do not know," said the nurse. "I knew no wife of his. I only know this child; he placed it years ago under my care. I understood there was no mother living. He told me after his death to bring it to you with these papers."

She gave him a packet of papers, but the squire in his anger threw them away. Whether he ever read them or not is a secret only known to God and himself. The packet was picked up the next morning by a servant, and thrown into an old lumber-room, while the squire vented his anger in loud words.

His brother was dead, and of the dead nothing but good must be said; but poor William was the first Beauchamp who had been a profligate, a deceiver of women. This unfortunate child was the first of its kind ever brought to Weston. He persisted in saying that his brother had never been married; but as it seemed clear enough it was his child, it should receive a decent education—more than that he would not say. So the child, a lovely little girl of seven, was sent to boarding-school, and John Beauchamp seemed to forget its existence. It remained there for ten years, and would perhaps have remained for ten years longer, but that the mistress of the school died, and when the other pupils were sent home, the child, now grown into a beautiful girl, was sent to Weston Grange. All the squire's anger was renewed at the sight of her.

"What on earth am I to do with this girl?" he asked of his old housekeeper, Mrs. Morgan. "I can not acknowledge her. I consider her birth the greatest stain upon our name. What am I to do with her?"

Mrs. Morgan was equally at a loss, until it occurred to her that she might make the young girl useful in the way of keeping accounts, a task which was both odious and repulsive to her. The squire gladly consented.

"Keep her out of my sight," he said; "be kind to her, let her have what she requires; but I would rather not see her."

Mrs. Morgan, who was of a kindly, compassionate nature, did her best for the young girl. She kept her carefully out of the squire's sight. She taught her many little useful arts; but the grand struggle came when it was necessary to give the young girl a name. Hitherto she had borne that of her nurse, 'Latour—Florence Latour,' and one day Mrs. Morgan took courage to ask the squire if he intended her to keep it.

Never had the squire been so angry with his faithful old servant.

"What name do you expect me to give her?" he asked. "Not my own. The name of Beauchamp has only been borne by those born in all honor, not by the children of shame and guilt. Let her be called Florence Latour, and teach her to be thankful that she bears, at least, the name of an honest woman."

It was strange how angry the good old squire always was over this friendless child; he was so kind, so considerate to others; he seemed to shrink even from the mention of her name, yet it was thought that he intended making some provision for her in his will. He had told the family solicitor, Mr. Treherne, so, and the commencement of a new will was found among his papers; but the squire died quite suddenly at last, and Florence Latour was left penniless and friendless.

The heir-at-law, the cousin, was not summoned for the funeral; he received notice of the death, and was asked to hold himself in readiness to come down and take possession on the day after. He liked that much better.

"I am glad to have been spared that ordeal," he said; "anything connected with death makes me so very nervous."

"Yet you will die yourself some day," said his wife, who never neglected any opportunity of making herself amiable.

"So will you," he retorted; "but that fact does not make the idea of death any the more pleasant."

Every preparation was made for their going. When Mr. Harcourt paid the bill, he did not neglect the opportunity of crushing the mistress of the house by the mention of his wealth and importance. They very properly made every one who had offered them the least slight, and even those who had not, as uncomfortable as possible, and then, with great rejoicing, took their departure for Weston Grange.

CHAPTER III.

A BRIGHT July evening, the day had been hot and sultry, but in the afternoon a shower of rain had fallen; the sun quickly dried all traces of it away, the leaves were of a fresher green, the flowers of a fairer color; the whole earth seemed to have been gladdened and refreshed, the birds sung in the trees, and the sun shone over all like a warm, bright blessing. Weston Grange looked more beautiful on this evening than it had ever done. It was a large, gray building of grand porportions and vast extent; the gray walls were covered with ivy and thick clustering roses, with purple passion flowers and jasmine; the large balconies were filled with gayly colored flowers; the grounds surrounding the house were beautiful and picturesque, the fountains played in the sunlight, the tall cedars gave most grateful shade; there were conservatories, ferneries, waterfalls, everything that could increase the beauty or add to the luxury of the place, and to-night they were looking their fairest.

Yesterday in that vast mansion all had been gloom and misery, for grim King Death reigned supreme, but to-day he had vanished; the windows were thrown open, all trace of the late melancholy event done away with, and preparations busily carried out for the coming of the new master. Perhaps it was for this that the old house wore its gayest attire, and the birds sung so sweetly in the stately trees. The servants moved about quickly, with expectant faces. True, there had been no will discovered, but the new master was sure to give them what the old squire intended to leave them; there could be no doubt about that. But there was one face in that grand old mansion that wore no smile, no bright look; that was pale with weeping and sad with sore sickness of heart.

At the back of the house was an old fruit orchard, and in this month of July it presented a most tempting picture—rich purple plums and brown pears, rosy apples and ripe damsons. At the end of the orchard a green gate led into a wild woodland waste; a rock, the top of which was covered with green shrubs, stood there, and a pretty little cave had been scooped from the rock. The light there was very subdued and mellow; a tiny water-fall rippled from the summit of the rock and fell into the calm, clear, deep pool below.

On this bright July evening a young girl sat in the cave alone; she had been weeping until it seemed that every tear was exhausted, and she had none left to shed; she had an open book by her side, but she never turned a page. Every now and then a deep sigh would rise from the very depths of her heart and tremble on her lips.

It was such a young and beautiful face that it seemed pitiful to have deep woe and sorrow upon it. It was a face that ought to have been radiant with happiness and bright with love. Fair, with the most delicate bloom, a color that one sees in the folded leaf of a rose; dark, straight brows, and eyes blue as the summer heavens; a mouth like a rosebud; sweet, sensitive lips, perfect in shape and color; with the prettiest of all dimpled chins; a neck and throat white as ivory, rounded arms and pretty little hands; but the crown of all that youthful loveliness was a wealth of soft, golden hair — not red, nor auburn, nor a pale tint of brown, but bright, beautiful, sunny gold; hair that, in the sunlight, looked like the aureole round the head of a saint. Just now, in the abandonment of her sorrow, it had fallen in great shining waves, and made her beautiful as a fairy queen.

She had ceased weeping now, and sat with her sorrowful eyes fixed on the smiling sky.

"Birds live to be happy," she murmured to herself; "they live to sing, the flowers to bloom. Why do I live, to whom life brings nothing but sorrow, I who ought never to have lived at all—who have no name, no home, no friends? Why should even birds and flowers be happier than I am?"

As she spoke, a shadow fell over the entrance of the cave, and looking up, the young girl saw the kindly old housekeeper.

"Now, Miss Florence," she said, "why are you hiding yourself here? You must not act in this way."

The girl burst into a passionate fit of weeping.

"Oh, Mrs. Morgan, I can not see them, I can not bear it! Why can I not die, when God knows how I long for it?"

"God knows best, my bonny bairn. You have only seen the dark side of the cloud; there is a silver lining, and some day it will be turned toward you."

"Ah, you are kind—you say these things to cheer me. What silver lining can exist for me? The only good thing that could happen to me would be death."

Mrs. Morgan sat down by the girl's side—she took one of the little white burning hands in hers.

"We all have something to bear, and, my dear, I do not hide from you that you will have many unpleasantnesses; but the only thing is to bear our troubles bravely; weak natures sit down and repine, they cry out continually, they let every one know their troubles. A strong nature bears up bravely, mounts upon its troubles, as it were, and forms of them a ladder to heaven."

The girl looked up with something more of hope on her face.

"I should like to do that, but I can not; I am always longing for some one to love me—to be happy, as other girls are. You do not know how sad it is to be quite alone in the world. I am; no one loves me, no one cares for me. If I died this moment, there is no one who would shed a tear for me."

"Except me," said the housekeeper.

The girl bent down and kissed the wrinkled old hand extended to her.

"Except you," she repeated. "I should indeed be ungrateful to forget you. Have you ever seen Mr. and Mrs. Harcourt, or the young ladies?"

"No; they have never been to Weston Grange. But if they are anything like the Beauchamps, you will soon be at home with them."

"Will they send me away?" asked the girl, humbly; "or will they let me live here, do you think?"

"I can not tell, my dear; as they have daughters of their own, they are sure to be kind to you."

Her face brightened wonderfully.

"Do you think so? And the daughters, what will they say to me?"

"To tell you the truth, Miss Florence, I expect the whole family will treat you as though you were a poor relation depending on them, and you must try to bear it cheerfully. Take my word for it, the young ladies will be very kind to you—they are sure to be so; young girls are always kind."

"How I shall like to see them!" she said, musingly, "how happy they must be with parents to love them, money and everything to make them happy—everything they wish! What a contrast between their lives and mine! How kind their great happiness must make them! What would you advise me to do, Mrs. Morgan—must I keep out of sight until they send for me?"

The woman looked with infinite pity on that young face.

"What a shameful thing that she should have, as it were, to apologize for her existence!" she thought.

"Perhaps that would be the best, my dear," she said. "If Mrs. Harcourt mentions you to me, trust me to say everything that is kind. Now leave this melancholy place, make yourself look as nice as you can—how you have been crying, poor child!—and be ready—"

"I will," said the girl, gratefully; "and you do not think they will scold me for being here, do you?"

"How can they? It is not your fault you are here; they can not scold you for being alive. Try and be as happy as you can. Remember my words—you will be happy some day, happier than you ever dream about being. You know you are growing up, Miss Florence, and you have a fair face of your own. Some one will fall in love with it, and then you will forget all this desolation and misery."

"I should thank Heaven!" said the girl, reverently. "I would rather have some one to love me than be rich as a queen. I do not care about money, but I do about love."

"You will have both some day," said the housekeeper consolingly. "I must go. They are to be here at seven, and I have a grand dinner to attend to. The lawyer, Mr. Treherne, returns to-morrow, and perhaps some arrangement will be made about you."

"Mrs. Morgan," said the girl, earnestly, "do you think that any one in the wide world was ever so unhappy as I am?"

"Yes, my dear; your trouble is light compared to that of others, and if you have courage you will rise above all your sorrow in time. You know, while I live you will never be friendless; when you have anything harder than usual to bear, come to my room, and I will help you; above all, remember my advice, and keep a cheerful face before people. There is nothing that the wealthy and the happy dislike so much as the continual reproach of a sad face."

And with these parting words, Mrs. Morgan went away, leaving the girl alone. She rose slowly from her seat on the mossy stone.

"Now I must not cry any more," she said; "there must be an end to all tears. I have to be brave, patient and courageous, and meet my fate."

She walked slowly through the orchard, and as she passed through the court-yard a traveling carriage drew up to the door; from it alighted three ladies dressed in deep mourning, and a gentleman, but they did not see Florence Latour.

CHAPTER IV.

"A VERY decent house indeed," said Mrs. Harcourt, as she looked round the grand old dining-room where the squire had been wont to exercise such noble hospitality, "but it wants modernizing. I should like to refurnish some of these rooms."

They had partaken of a *recherché* little dinner, and now sat with a bottle of the squire's famous old port, glowing like molten rubies, a dainty dessert, consisting of purple grapes, ripe peaches and apricots.

The young ladies, after heartily enjoying these dainties, had gone to choose their rooms.

"This is a change, my dear," said Mr. Harcourt, complacently, "from the lodgings at Brighton."

"Of course it is a change," said his lady, snappishly, "but I hope, Mr. Harcourt, you will keep up your dignity before the servants; there is no need for them to know that we have not been bred well enough. Do not be so ready to admire everything, it is extremely ill-bred."

On any other occasion these words would have caused a retort which would have ended in a quarrel—a very usual thing with Mr. and Mrs. Harcourt—but the dainty, well-served dinner and the fine old port had left him in a state of mind almost seraphic.

He made no reply, but smiled serenely.

"We certainly can not blame ourselves with ever having given away too much," continued the lady, "and I do not see any necessity for altering our habits in this respect—money given away is money lost."

"You are quite right, my dear," said her husband.

"Another thing, Richard, what we spend let it be spent upon ourselves. In our rank the girls ought to marry well—they must marry well, in fact, and money spent on them to further that purpose will be well spent."

"Your words are the words of wisdom, my dear Sophia."

"You must make inquiries about our neighbors, and if you find any of them eligible, you must at once invite them."

"I know of one very eligible bachelor—rich, titled, and handsome."

"The very thing; who is he?" asked Mrs. Harcourt, hurriedly.

"Sir Leonard Falconer, of Falcon Court. But it is only fair to tell you, my dear, that the Duchess of Leamington would be very glad to win him for one of her daughters; he is sought after by half the county."

"I am not afraid; there's no finer figure in England than Mabel's—and no more beautiful voice than Jane's. I should really feel myself rewarded for some of my trouble if I could see one of my daughters Lady Falconer—the other would be sure to marry well. I shall invite him often. Mabel must dress becomingly, and Jane must sing. I shall ask no other girls to meet him."

What reply the husband would have made is unknown, for at that moment the dining-room door opened, and Mabel entered, with no very amiable expression on her face.

"Are you aware of this—this imposition, mamma?" she asked, throwing herself back in a chair. "I am shocked —horrified!"

"What do you mean, child?" asked her mother, sharply.

"I went through what is called the western wing, thinking that the rooms were more pleasant there—and, mamma, I saw a young girl, positively a girl about seventeen; she flushed crimson when I saw her, and she says 'she belongs to the house.'"

"What impertinence!" cried Mrs. Harcourt. "Richard, ring the bell; let us see who this is."

An expression of something like alarm came over Mr. Harcourt's face.

"A young girl—says she belongs to the house?" he repeated. "My dear, can that be the incumbrance mentioned by Mr. Treherne?"

"Ring the bell!" said the lady, sharply, and he instantly complied. It was answered by a footman.

"Send Mrs. Morgan to me at once," cried the irate lady; "without any delay—do you hear?"

A few minutes, and then Mrs. Morgan entered, looking very pale. Mrs. Harcourt sternly repeated her daughter's story.

"Who is this girl?" she asked, imperiously—"and what does she mean by saying that she belongs to the house—pray explain?"

The housekeeper looked uneasily at Miss Mabel.

"I could explain to you better, madame," she said, "if you would allow me to see you alone."

"Mabel, leave the room," said Mrs. Harcourt.

"Indeed, mamma, I see no occasion for anything of the kind; I know quite as much of the world as this good woman; what *you* may hear and *she* can tell, I may certainly listen to."

Mrs. Harcourt looked very angry, but she knew how useless it was to discuss with her daughter; the head of the family smiled, as was his wont when any difference of opinion arose between the ladies; but the good housekeeper looked shocked at such want of respect and obedience to proper authority. She looked fixedly at the young lady, and in her own mind quite agreed with her, that nothing she could say would hurt her.

"The young girl, madame, is called Florence Latour. The late squire kept her at school for many years. She is very clever and accomplished, and has no other home but this."

"What claim has she to this home?" asked the lady, haughtily.

The housekeeper's face flushed crimson.

"My late master, the squire, had a younger brother—"

"I know," interrupted Mrs. Harcourt, impatiently.

"And this girl is his daughter, madame."

"His daughter!" repeated the lady, in undisguised amazement. "I never heard that he was married!"

"Nor did I, madame," said the housekeeper, slowly.

Mrs. Harcourt started from her chair in violent indignation.

"You do not mean to tell me," she cried, "that a girl of that kind has been allowed to come here to live in this house?"

"Alas! madame, she has no other home."

"Where is her wicked mother?"

"Dead—long ago," said the housekeeper.

"She must go at once!" said the lady. "I could not allow my innocent children even to see such a person. I am horrified. I blame you exceedingly, Mrs. Morgan; you ought to have told me of this at once. She ought, most certainly, to have left the house before we entered it. She must go at once."

"Of course, madame, your will is law," said the housekeeper, slowly, "but she has no other home, no money, no friends; it might, perhaps, excite unpleasant remarks if she were sent away so suddenly."

"Of course Mrs. Morgan is right, my dear—you can not do such a thing hastily. I agree with you, she must go and work for her living, but a situation of some kind must be found for her—you could not turn a girl adrift upon the world."

"*I* could and would," said the lady; and, to do her justice, she would cheerfully have done it.

"Send her to us," interrupted Mr. Harcourt.

"I have never been so annoyed in all my life," said his wife. "It is unheard of that respectable people should be exposed to this kind of thing. You can fetch her here, Mrs. Morgan."

All hope for the hapless, helpless girl had died out of the housekeeper's kindly heart as she listened—all hope of kindly protection, of help, of compassionate kindness; one look at the hard, shrewd, cold, vinegarish face before her told her none of woman's kindly graces were to be found there. She turned away to go in search of the girl, and her heart died within her as she did so.

"As though *she* could help it," said the woman to herself. "It is her misfortune, poor child, not her fault, Heaven help her—and for the matter of that, it will be Heaven help us all. These people are not like the Beauchamps."

It was some time before the housekeeper could find Florence, and then she discovered that the unhappy girl had taken refuge in her room. She was not weeping—she seemed to have passed that stage—but she was deadly pale, and her hands trembled as she clasped them round the housekeeper's arm.

"I have seen one of them," she said, "and she spoke so angrily to me. What shall I do? Oh, Mrs. Morgan, could I run away? What shall I do?"

The kind face bent over her, flushed with indignation.

"Miss Florence," she said, "you need not be afraid. I am sorry to speak one word against my employers, but these are not gentlefolks, my dear—not true gentle-people—no matter how much money they have. You need not fear them. Hold up your head, my poor child! Why need you tremble? You can go away and work for yourself. Dearly as I love the old place, I shall not stay here long. Come with me and see the mistress of the house."

"Must I go?" said Florence, and the housekeeper saw that she trembled in every limb.

"Yes. Keep up your courage; always remember there is a higher future waiting for you. Do not be frightened; speak up boldly when Mrs. Harcourt addresses you."

"You are coming with me," said the girl, clinging to her only friend.

"Yes, my dear. May Heaven—Heaven forsake me, when I forsake you. I can say no more."

CHAPTER V.

"So," said Mrs. Harcourt, slowly, her face darkening with anger—"so this is the girl?"

Mother and daughter both detested her on the instant, but the beautiful face and quivering lips took the master of the house by surprise; he half rose from his chair, but his lady wife frowned.

"There is no need to rise, Mr. Harcourt," she said. "Mrs. Morgan, will you bring that young person here?"

She was a mother herself, and the sight of those pleading eyes, that wistful face, might have softened her, but it did not; she turned angrily to the housekeeper.

"Why has not this girl been attended to? See that all that nonsensical quantity of hair is cut off; you should never encourage foolish notions, Mrs. Morgan."

There was not one word of kindness, not one word of sympathy, and the girl's lips quivered; it was with difficulty she refrained from weeping aloud.

"I was not prepared to find you here," she said, severely. "Had I known, some arrangements should have been made before my daughters arrived."

"I am very sorry, madame," stammered the poor child.

"Yes, that is all very well; you must prepare to quit the Grange at once. You have received a tolerable education, I presume?"

She said yes; that she had tried hard—oh, so hard—to study. Mrs. Harcourt brusquely interrupted her.

"It was very generous of the squire, but then he had no claims upon him; such generosity on our part would be sinful; we have children of our own. Let me hear the result of this education. Can you speak French?"

"French, Italian, and German, madame," replied the girl, humbly.

"Do not boast. What else, pray? Speak the truth, and no more."

"I can play and sing, madame; I can paint in oils."

"You know enough for a governess, then. Perhaps I may interest myself in getting you a situation. While you remain here you may make yourself useful to my daughters; but remember to keep out of the road of all visitors; do you hear?"

"Yes, madame."

"And mind that I do not see you again with that tangle of hair. You can go. Mrs. Morgan, you will see that all my directions are followed out."

"Thank Heaven!" said the girl, when she was once more alone with her humble friend. "Oh, thank Heaven, I am to go away! What cold faces; they had not one word of welcome for me—not one word. Will all the world be the same?"

"No, child; you will find warm, loving, true hearts there, as well as cold ones."

A slight storm followed their exit.

"What a very beautiful girl!" said Mr. Harcourt, "and what a pity, my dear, that she should cut off that magnificent hair."

"Just like papa," sneered Mabel; "the idea of calling such a wax doll beautiful."

Mr. Harcourt," said his wife, severely, "such remarks do not become either your age or station. Mabel, you may as well make the girl useful while she stays. She is a good French scholar—you might brush up your French a little by talking to her. See if she has any taste in dress; if so, she can alter some of those old silks. Mind you do not allow the least familiarity from her."

"No fear of that, mamma;" and, indeed, there was not the least.

"I am very seriously annoyed," said Mrs. Harcourt; "but we can do nothing, I suppose, without Mr. Treherne's advice."

The morrow brought Mr. Treherne, who was curious to see the new representative of an old and honored family.

He was disappointed at first sight by the faces of husband and wife; he rightly judged the mean, sordid, avaricious souls. Almost the first conversation was about Florence. Mrs. Harcourt had insisted on being present, somewhat to the lawyer's astonishment, but she had been too long accustomed to manage her husband's affairs to give it up now.

"You mentioned an incumbrance in your letter," said the lady, "and you were speaking, I presume, of the young girl? I consider the whole matter very annoying indeed."

"The late squire certainly ought to have made some provision for her," said Mr. Treherne. "It is unpardonable to have left her in this destitute state."

Mrs. Harcourt looked angrily at him.

"I should imagine the squire to have been far too moral a man ever to encourage vice," she said.

"I do not consider providing for a helpless orphan is encouraging vice, madame," retorted the lawyer.

"Who was the girl's mother?" asked Mr. Harcourt, anxious to prevent a quarrel between his wife and his lawyer.

"I can not say—I can only guess; but I myself shall always say and think that Mr. William Beauchamp was married to her, no matter who she was."

"Married!" cried Mrs. Harcourt—"why that would make the girl heiress to the whole estate."

"Certainly it would. There are no proofs of any such marriage, but I most certainly think it took place."

"My dear," said Mr. Harcourt to his wife, "we had better be kind to the girl."

"Nonsense! you are easily frightened. If there had been any marriage, the squire would have heard of it," said Mrs. Harcourt; "there has been no such thing!"

"I willingly admit there is no proof of it, madame; but I knew William Beauchamp—he was the soul of honor; nothing in this world could shake my faith in him. I know another thing, and that is, the squire always intended to leave her provided for."

"Pray what did he intend to leave her?" asked Mrs. Harcourt.

"Two hundred per annum, madame; he mentioned the sum to me, and I quite approved of his purpose."

"Two hundred a year! Most absurd! It was really a fortunate thing that the squire did not make such an absurd will—he would certainly have been laughed at."

Mr. Treherne continued gravely:

"The squire also intended leaving fifty pounds per annum to the housekeeper, Mrs. Morgan, and legacies of twenty-five and fifty pounds to each of the servants."

"Ridiculous!" said Mr. Harcourt.

"Of course," continued the lawyer, "it is quite at your own option whether you carry out those kindly intentions or not; but permit me, as the friend and adviser of the family, to say one thing: do not turn this young girl out-of-doors. There are many people who share my belief, and think that her father was married; whether it was so or not, there has always been great sympathy expressed for the girl, and it would do you an immensity of harm if you were to turn her out. I know of nothing that would excite a more unpleasant feeling in the neighborhood."

In vain Mrs. Harcourt tried to say something with bland courtesy that was yet full of defiance. Mr. Treherne refused to hear any more on the subject. He had said what he had to say; now let them please themselves. He had made an effort for the poor, friendless girl; let them do as they would.

He was not very anxious to continue his office as agent for the estate. He had had a great love and reverence for the old squire; he had none for these people who succeeded him. It was a matter of perfect indifference to him whether he continued in his office or not. They saw it, and for that reason were doubly anxious to retain him. Mr. Harcourt begged that he would serve him faithfully as he had done the squire.

"I will do it if you wish," said Mr. Treherne, "but I can foresee many points on which we shall disagree. I am decidedly of opinion that the legacies ought to be paid. Mrs. Morgan, for example, has lived in this house since she was a young girl of twelve; she is now nearly sixty. Such long and faithful service deserves a reward."

"She has been well paid, and has saved money, I do not doubt," said Mrs. Harcourt.

But the lawyer was not to be beguiled into a controversy with her. He addressed himself entirely to Mr. Harcourt, and it is only fair to say that gentleman felt a thrill of delight in seeing his wife snubbed.

"I suppose," said the lady to her husband, some time afterward, "that we shall be compelled to keep this odious girl, whether we like it or not?"

"You will not make her life too pleasant," said Mr. Harcourt. "Now, Sophia, could you not stretch a point for once, and be kind to the girl? It's very annoying, I know, but she can not help it, poor thing! It is hardly fair to blame her."

"Leave me to manage my own business, Mr. Harcourt; men are all alike—the sight of a fair face is enough to make them weak as water."

"Nay, we are not quite so bad. I do not mean spoil her, or indulge her, or anything of that kind, but you might be kind to her; I am sure the poor girl would be grateful."

"If she does remain, and I have not made up my mind about it, she must act as maid to Mabel and Jane."

"Heaven help her!" thought the master of Weston Grange, but he did not dare to breathe such a prayer. So his lady decided, and she told Mr. Treherne that evening, with a grim smile on her face, that she had been considering what he said, and had decided upon keeping Florence with her. The lawyer looked up most agreeably surprised.

"You have decided kindly, madame," he said, and although she had resolved that Florence should save the expenses of two maids, and should toil incessantly, that lady felt all the glow of a virtuous action.

CHAPTER VI.

It is supposed that the wild Indians have a fair idea of torture, that they know how to inflict tortures that do not occur to others; but for torture, in what may be called its refined state, nothing can exceed the pain inflicted by proud, disagreeable, jealous women on those in their power. The tortures of the Indians are nothing to it. In the one case the body suffers; in the other, heart, mind and soul.

No words could tell what Florence endured from the time the Harcourts took possession of Weston Grange until the old housekeeper's prophecies were fulfilled, and the silver side of the cloud was turned to her.

Mrs. Harcourt, on the day after her conversation with Mr. Treherne, sent for the young girl to her room. She had thought long and deeply over her project, and it seemed to her a most economical one. It would be a great advantage to her daughters to have some one who spoke French, and could give Jane an idea of pronunciation in singing her Italian songs; one who could be used at the same time as a maid, who would perhaps display excellent taste in dress, and give to her daughters all the advantage of a refined and elegant taste. As for cost, she would take care the girl cost little enough: there would be no need to give her money, she could wear the girls' old dresses, and the food of one person would make but little difference in a large household. The more she thought of her plan, the more excellent it seemed. In a glow of good-humored virtue she rang the bell and ordered the young girl to be sent to her. Florence entered, pale and trembling, expecting some harsh decision, some unkind words; to her surprise Mrs. Harcourt received her with a smile.

"I have sent for you," she said, "that you may know what decision Mr. Harcourt and myself have arrived at with regard to you. I shall expect your life-long gratitude. Many people in our position would at once have sent you adrift. We do not intend acting so harshly; we are willing that you should find a good home with us. We will feed you, clothe you, give you all the advantages of a good home, and in return we shall exact from you certain services; they will, I hope, be cheerfully rendered."

The young girl muttered something, but no expression of gratitude came over her face.

"Do you not think, madame," she said, quietly, "that it would be better perhaps for me to go out in the world and work?"

"I do not think so. You would not find it so easy to find a situation, owing to the unfortunate nature of your position; no one will take you as governess to children. We could not answer any inquiries made as to your character, and there would be insurmountable difficulties; there would be the expense of providing you with an outfit; in fact, it is not to be thought of."

The beautiful face grew paler as the lady went on.

"While you live you can never be thankful enough for this kindness shown to you now. In return for it I shall expect you always to speak French with my daughters, to wait upon them, to assist in making their dresses, to dress their hair; in short, to do all that they require; not much, not very hard work, considering what a home you will have; and I shall wish you always to be cheerful and well-behaved."

Again the murmured words that she did not understand, but chose to interpret as thanks.

"I am glad to see you grateful," she said, with great condescension. "There is another thing I must mention. The servants in the house are accustomed to call you Miss Florence; you must see that that is put a stop to at once; it places you on an equality with my daughters, and that I could not for one moment allow. You can begin your duties at once by going to Miss Harcourt's room and attending to what she wants."

"I do not believe," thought the lady to herself, "that she is one bit grateful. She looks like a princess in disguise; I must take all that nonsense out of her."

The whole household were informed that it was madame's wish that the young girl should be called Florence, and not miss. There were many remarks made that would have sorely displeased madame had she overheard them. One impression gained ground, and that was that the "new people" were not "really gentle-people;" they were so different to the "princely Beauchamps."

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"So you are to be our maid?" said Mabel, when Florence timidly presented herself. "Mamma must please herself, of course; but I do not think it a very sensible arrangement. I hope you will keep your place."

"I will try my best to please you," said a sweet, musical voice, the very music of which was hateful in Mabel's ears.

"Can you make a dress?" asked Miss Jane, sharply.

"I have never tried," was the quiet reply; "but I will do so now."

Miss Harcourt opened a drawer, and took from it some remnants of crape and black jet beads.

"Try if you can make something ornamental of this for my dress," she said, and then stood moodily watching the slender fingers as they rapidly moved among the jet.

"How do you contrive to keep your hands so white?" asked Mabel. "They look as though you had never done one day's work."

"I work very hard," said Florence. "My hands are naturally white, I suppose. I do nothing to make them so."

And in a few more minutes she had fashioned an elegant ornament out of the materials given to her. She held it out to Mabel, perhaps in her simplicity expecting a kind word.

"It will do," said Mabel, ungraciously. "Now take this black silk carefully to pieces. We shall find you plenty of work in time."

The sisters had each a suite of pretty rooms—a bedroom, dressing-room, and sitting-room; there was also attached to them a kind of anteroom, and here it was arranged that Florence should sit to sew.

It was Miss Jane who proposed this spiteful arrangement.

"Then we can see that she is always at work, and she is within call," observed that sagacious young lady; and from that hour the tortures commenced for poor Florence.

Mrs. Morgan had been very kind to her; she had given her light tasks, easy of accomplishment, and had allowed her to spend all the rest of her time in reading, or study of some kind; but that was now all at an end. She was obliged to rise before six; she had to see that both young ladies had a cup of tea brought into their rooms, and then to prepare all kinds of luxuries for their toilets; she must attend while they dressed. If they happened to be good-humored she escaped, but if not they did not hesitate to abuse her to their hearts' content.

No lady's-maid would have put up with half that she patiently endured. When the young ladies went to breakfast she went to her sewing; sometimes she found time to take a cup of tea, but both sisters, if they could help it, would never allow her one minute away from her work. The whole day long she was busy at her sewing. It was impossible to say which was the greater, her patience or their insolence to her; they insisted upon her work being perfection—she must undo and do over and over again to satisfy them; with aching head and half-blinded eyes she must leave her work to dress them for dinner. How they ordered her about, scolded her, and found fault with everything she did, words could not describe. When they went down to dinner it would only have been natural for the girl to have gone out into the fresh air; but no, she must return, without loss of time, to her work—she must sew until it was time to attend to the undressing of the two young ladies, then she must prepare dresses for the morning. Lest she should escape their vigilance, and contrive either to read or go out of doors, they set her so many tasks, and would have them finished. No galley-slave ever worked harder than this young girl, beautiful, graceful, and accomplished. Her meals were brought into the little anteroom to her, lest she should lose time by talking if she went to the housekeeper's room.

At first she wept wildly; there were whole nights when the servants could not sleep for the sound of that pitiful, passionate weeping. After a time she ceased to weep, tears were all unavailing—a dull kind of apathy crept over her, her lovely eyes lost their light, her beautiful face grew pale and sad, she was never seen to smile; she grew thinner and paler day by day, she seemed too wearied even to complain; she would lay her head on the housekeeper's knee, and, looking wistfully up at her, ask:

"Do you think I shall live very long, Mrs. Morgan? I shall be so glad when it's my time to die; I often think that God will be, oh, so much kinder to me because I have had no happiness here below, and He knows it is not my fault—is it? If any one told me I had to die to-morrow, I should be so glad; I am not complaining, but I am so tired—so tired!"

At last she looked so ill, so altered, that Mrs. Morgan took courage and went to Mrs. Harcourt to ask permission for the young girl to go out sometimes. That lady accorded it very ungraciously.

She did not see what such girls wanted with so much fresh air!

"I do not think, madame, she has left the house for the last two months," said Mrs. Morgan.

She was graciously permitted to go out while the family were at lunch, but she must be back and at her work again when lunch was over.

She did not even smile when she was told of the privilege; it seemed to the poor, overworked, overburdened girl, that it was too late for anything, except to wish that she were ready to die.

CHAPTER VII.

FOUR months had passed since the Harcourts took up their residence at Weston Grange; sufficient time had been devoted, they thought, to mourning, so the dark dresses were laid aside, sumptuous toilets ordered from London and Paris, and the Misses Harcourt prepared to astonish the neighborhood.

One of the first gentlemen to call upon the new squire was Sir Leonard Falconer, of Falcon's Court—a handsome, genial, high-spirited nobleman—a thoroughly honest English gentleman; chivalrous, earnest, noble, with a certain kind of simplicity, for which every one loved him. He was very handsome, with a frank, high-bred Saxon face, and beautiful eyes; beautiful lips, too, that never smiled or pleaded in vain.

He liked visiting at Weston Grange. For his benefit, Richard Harcourt put on airs of cordiality and genial hospitality quite foreign to his nature; for him, Mrs. Harcourt smiled kind, bright smiles; for his especial benefit and advantage, Mabel's fine figure was displayed to the utmost advantage; and for him Jane sung her sweetest songs.

They professed such cordial, kindly liking for him, they made him so welcome, that Sir Leonard was blinded as to their real character; he visited them often. Poor Florence had cause to remember his name; the sisters were ordinarily tiresome enough, but when he was coming she was in despair.

Jane would change her flowers, her ornaments, her jewels a dozen times over; and no dress could be devised that showed Mabel's figure to sufficient perfection. When Florence had patiently brought out six or seven Mabel would lose her temper.

"You know Sir Leonard is coming, and you do it on purpose," she would say. "You are too stupid to live!" and then the hard hair-brush would be rapped on the soft, white fingers.

"Sir Leonard is coming!" soon became a formula that poor Florence detested. She, herself, was never allowed to come near any of the rooms when visitors were present; she had strict orders to confine herself to the back of the house, so that she had never seen Sir Leonard. She heard plenty of him; at night the sisters quarreled most terribly about him, each one repeating every word he had said.

"I am sure it is me he likes," Mabel would say; "he looks at me, and—well, I know I am the favorite."

"Nothing of the kind!" snapped Jane, "Sir Leonard loves music—he will never marry any one who does not sing well."

"He will never marry you, my dear," says Mabel, serenely.

"Nor you, my love," retorts Jane.

And then, having quarreled with each other, they would both unite in abusing Florence.

She was weary in her heart and soul and mind; weary unto death; but there seemed no escape from her slavery—none but death.

One day it happened that the whole family—father, mother, and daughters—had gone out, and Mrs. Morgan, going up into the anteroom, insisted upon Florence taking a run in the grounds.

"I will finish that dress for you," she said; "it is a lovely, clear, bright, cold morning, and you must go."

By that time the girl had grown apathetic. She did not care whether she went out or not. She was fast reaching that state when nothing either pained or pleased her.

More to please the housekeeper than herself, she went; and that morning was the turning point of her life.

It was bright, clear, and cold; a beautiful October morning, and the gorgeous autumn flowers were all in bloom; the leaves—red, golden, and brown—lay on the paths; the woods looked inviting, and she had not seen them since the old squire died.

She was a poet by nature, this unloved, neglected girl, and the poet's soul was strong within her. The dead leaves, the bare branches, the clear blue sky, the wind half singing, half moaning—rising and falling like the music of some grand chant—filled her soul with a sense of beauty for which she could not find words. It was so great a luxury to be alone—to be away from the sound of those shrill, scolding voices—away from the cold faces, away from the wearisome tasks—out here in the sweet, wild woods alone. It was luxury enough to find a seat on one of the fallen trees, and sit with clasped hands watching the swaying branches, the blue sky, the long woodland vistas—listening to the grand anthems of the mind—content. So well content to sit there alone.

She little dreamed how fair a picture she presented, nor who was watching her as she sat there. The ill-fitting dress she wore—one of Mabel's, a sad-colored silk that had done duty for many years—did not and could not disguise the grace of that perfect figure; the beautiful, girlish face, so sweet, so sad, so wistful, perhaps all the lovelier for its traces of delicate health, was inexpressibly touching; there was something so resigned, so patient in the attitude, and he, who was looking on with eyes full of admiration, said to himself—

"Youth should not look like that."

He was standing leaning against an old stile. He had intended to cross the woods, but seeing this beautiful vision under the trees, he stopped to watch it. She was perfectly unconscious of his presence. As he stood there, she took her hat from her head, and all the wealth of golden hair fell over her—the magnificent hair so detested by Mrs. Harcourt. She laid her head back against the trunk of a tree, watching intently the clear sky and tall trees. Then he saw the beautiful eyes fill with tears, and the sweet lips quiver.

" She looks very unhappy," he thought; " what can be the matter with her? and who can she be? I must speak to her. I never saw a face one half so beautiful. I wish I could comfort her."

And with the sudden wish to comfort her came such a rush of love that he trembled as he looked at her. He crossed the path, and then, seeing that she looked up in startled alarm, he took off his hat and said:

" I trust that I have not disturbed you."

Her face flushed crimson; she rose with a frightened look he never forgot. She had been told so often never to allow any visitors or strangers to see her, and now here was a gentleman positively speaking to her. He did not understand her alarm.

" I am sure that I have frightened you," he said. " Let me introduce myself, then you will know that I am not a stranger; my name is Sir Leonard Falconer, and I am a frequent visitor at the Grange here."

She looked up at him in wonder; this was Leonard Falconer—this handsome, kindly, nobleman—the gentleman over whom her cousins were always disputing—it was almost impossible. He could not help seeing the surprise so plainly expressed in her eyes, and he laughed good-naturedly.

" Why do you look so astonished at me?" he asked.

" I—beg your pardon," she replied; " but I am so surprised to find *you* are Sir Leonard Falconer—"

" You have heard my name, then?" he interrupted, hastily, "yet I do not remember to have had the pleasure of meeting you before."

Again her face grew crimson. Oh, what would happen to her if by any chance this incident came to Mrs. Harcourt's ears? She looked at him—the sweet, wistful face was raised so shyly to his.

"You look so kind," she said, "I want to ask you to grant me a favor."

"I will do anything on earth for you," he said, eagerly.

"Will you please not to mention to any one that you have seen me here? I ought not to be here, but I wanted to see the woods. You will not tell any one?"

"I will not indeed," he replied; "but you forget that I do not know you—and I should so very much like to see you again."

She only smiled; and he remembered it, because it was the first smile he had seen on her face.

The next moment she had vanished among the trees, and he would not distress her by following her to see where she went.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mrs. Harcourt was seated, with her two daughters, in the drawing-room at Weston Grange. They were evidently prepared for visitors, and were sitting in state. Mabel was most elaborately and beautifully dressed, thanks to the skill, the taste and industry of Florence. Jane, less elaborate, not having any great amount of figure to display, was busily engaged in copying music.

They sat in silence for some minutes, then Mrs. Harcourt said:

"Sir Leonard Falconer has been coming here for some time now."

Neither of the sisters uttered a word in reply.

"Has he—is he particular in his attentions to either of you?" continued Mrs. Harcourt.

An angry look from Jane.

"I do not know what you call particular, mamma," she said.

"I hope," continued Mrs. Harcourt, "that you do not allow any silly feeling of jealousy to interfere. Remember, it does not matter which of you becomes Lady Falconer, but I shall certainly expect one or the other to succeed."

"We can not help it if Sir Leonard does not propose," said Mabel, sulkily.

"You can and must. He comes so often, and is so inclined to be friendly with us, that I am quite sure if you managed discreetly, you could get a proposal from him."

"I do not think so," said Jane. "He is, as you say, very kind, very friendly, but nothing of that kind is ever alluded to."

"Then you must be very deficient. Many girls, with only half the chance that Sir Leonard has given you, would have been married before now."

"Sir Leonard Falconer!" announced a servant; and a change, wonderful to see, came over the faces of the ladies. The shrewd, sour looks vanished as though by magic; sweetest smiles, most bland and amicable grace, beamed in each countenance. Sir Leonard was warmly welcomed.

"We were just wishing for a visitor to dispel our ennui," said Mrs. Harcourt. "My husband is gone out, and we were very lonely."

The young baronet made some laughing reply, greeted Mabel, and going over to Jane, sat down by her side.

"What song are you copying?" he asked.

"Your favorite," she replied; "'The Bells of Abergeldy.'"

His face lighted with pleasure.

"Will you sing it for me?" he asked; "the air has haunted me since I heard it."

Jane complied in her most charming manner. She had a very sweet face, and though she sung without expression, without feeling, or pathos, her voice was certainly sweet and musical.

"Thank you," he said. "I have never heard any air that I like better."

"He certainly prefers Jane," thought the watchful mother; "I must give Mabel a hint to keep out of the way."

"How some faces remind one of music," continued Sir Leonard; "that air, 'The Bells of Abergeldy,' is very sweet and sad; I have seen a face that brought it so forcibly to my mind—sad, sweet, wistful, lovely, young, and full of pathos."

Mrs. Harcourt looked up in alarm. It would never do to have him in such raptures over other people's faces.

"You are romantic, Sir Leonard," she said. "Jane, my dear, see if you can not find some other little song that will please Sir Leonard."

Nothing loath, Jane sought and found; but Sir Leonard was *distrait*—he did not seem in his usual spirits; he sighed frequently, answered at random, and gave unmistakable signs of absence of mind. At last, to Mrs. Harcourt's intense horror, he said:

"You have but these two daughters, Mrs. Harcourt? I think I have never heard you mention a third."

"I have but the two," she replied, concisely.

"Do pardon my curiosity," he continued, "but have you no young lady relative or visitor staying with you?"

"Nothing of the kind," replied Mrs. Harcourt, promptly, and Sir Leonard only looked half satisfied.

"Why do you ask?" inquired Mabel, abruptly.

"I fancied I had seen a young face; I must have been mistaken," he said.

But Sir Leonard did not recover himself; he was restless, and they all noticed it. Mrs. Harcourt invited him to remain for lunch, and, for the first time since they had known him, he declined; he took leave of them earlier than usual. Jane's face grew white with anger as he went.

"Mamma!" she cried—"you may say what you like, but I am certain he has seen that odious Florence. You would keep her here, and now we shall suffer for it."

"He can not have seen her; she is always at work in her room when he calls."

"She is deep enough, and cunning enough to have contrived to. She has just the baby-face that captivates some men. I thought when he was speaking of the face he had seen, that he meant her, and I am right; he has seen her in the house somewhere; she is always about. Did you not hear what he asked? Depend upon it, he is trying to make out who she is."

The result was such an increase of severity that poor Florence was almost desperate. Going out was prohibited after nine in the morning.

"What walking was necessary for her health," Mrs. Harcourt told her, "must be done before then. The young ladies made great complaints of her indolence, her forwardness, and these faults must be corrected. She must work harder and not be so fond of showing herself about the house and seeking admiration."

Heaven help the poor child! She left the room after that long, severe, and unmerited lecture, with a white, wondering face. She was not in the least degree conscious of having deserved such a lecture.

How was she to work harder when every moment of her time was so fully occupied?—how was she to be seen less when she hardly ever quitted the anteroom? She laid her head upon the table—not weeping—but with a quiet, resigned despair far more touching than words.

"I do not want to be wicked," she moaned; "but would it not have been far better for me had I never been born?"

So the housekeeper found her—sad, resigned, hopeless—and, when the girl had moaned out her story, the kindly woman kissed the white face.

"Take heart, my dear," she said. "I had a dream about you last night, and if that dream does not come true I will never believe in anything again. Take heart; however dark the night, there is always a bright morning dawn."

But it seemed to Florence the last gleam of sunshine had died away. It had been some pleasure to go out, to leave her troubles and enjoy the beauties of earth and sky. Unknown almost to herself, another element mingled in that dull, joyless life; the meeting with the handsome stranger had been quite an event to her. She had read admiration in his face; his eyes had brightened as he looked at her; he had wished to see her again, and it was the first time that such an event had happened.

She could not forget the kindly, handsome face that had smiled upon her. She did not know why the bare recollection of it made her heart beat and her face flush; she did not know why she looked forward with such longing to going out again; why she was always wondering whether she should see him, whether he really cared for Jane or Mabel. They, believing that he had seen her, talked of him more than ever. They talked of him as of a lover, as of one soon to belong to the family; they repeated to each other all the complimentary speeches he made; and sweet, simple Florence listened in wonder.

Could it be possible that he loved one of them? Did he know what they really were, or was he deceived? She could not think that any man, knowing them, could love them.

"Perhaps," she thought to herself, "it is only to me they are so unkind."

But then she remembered how all the servants detested them; how the old ones were all leaving in disgust, and the new ones sneered at every one. No, the fault must lie in themselves. The memory of a thousand mean actions rushed over her mind; the recollection of unkind and untruthful words, of unprovoked insult, of passionate recriminations, came over her, and she was compelled to own that if he married either of them he would be wretched for life. He looked so kind, so good, it was pitiful to see him deceived. He could never be happy.

Then she wondered if, often as he came there, she should ever see him again; would he speak to her—would he expect her to speak to him? She wove a thousand fancies over him, and always ended by lamenting that he should be made wretched for life.

Sir Leonard had not forgotten her; her sad, beautiful face haunted him. He was using every effort to find out where she lived. He had thought from seeing her in the woods that she must live at the Grange, but they denied having any young lady visitors. He had not noticed her dress; nothing had struck him but the lovely face. He never dreamed of looking for her among Mrs. Harcourt's dependents. She was not visiting at the Grange. She must be staying somewhere else, and Sir Leonard was suddenly seized with a mania for visiting his friends and neighbors; but go where he would he could find no trace of her; he asked continually, and people must have thought he had a mania on the subject of visitors.

Nowhere could he find again the lovely, pure, sorrowful face. He had never heard for many years of the child who was brought to the Grange, in common with all the neighborhood; he had heard the story at the time, though he was but a child himself; but he never even thought of it again. So now he spent days in fruitless research, and he began to think that he should never see the girl whom he had so ardently admired again. He was in despair, for it dawned upon him slowly that although he had only seen her once, he loved her with a love that could only end in death.

CHAPTER IX.

Mrs. Harcourt began to think it necessary to bring matters to a crisis; here was Sir Leonard coming three or four times each week to the house, and no results; whether it was from his own backwardness, or because the girls were so stupid, she could not say; in any case, a little help would not be out of the way. She decided upon giving a ball; there was not really any reason why she should not; the time for mourning had expired; the neighbors had been very hospitable; there was no reason why they should not give a grand entertainment, and so repay the numerous hospitalities that had been shown to them.

At a ball there were so many opportunities of making a proposal; there was something so very free and easy about it—no stiffness, no ceremony; the young people walked about and enjoyed themselves as much as they liked; there was no restraint such as prevailed in drawing-room intercourse.

She would give a ball, and then it was quite possible Sir Leonard might hurry himself a little; the girls should be superbly dressed; in fact, they should have every chance, and then if nothing came of it, why they must turn their attention elsewhere.

Nothing could exceed the delight of the young ladies—a ball in their own house seemed something too beautiful to be true. The most magnificent toilets were ordered for the occasion; nothing could exceed their good humor and patronage.

That good humor did not, however, extend to Florence; they were harder than ever with her. For this ball she must work almost day and night. Mrs. Harcourt advised them to engage some one to help the young girl, but the sisters had found out by this time that no one had the same exquisite and artistic taste as Florence. It was not in vain that the girl had received an artistic education; the pity of it was that all her talent and the exercise of it should be limited to dressing two girls who could never be made to look really nice.

The evening of the ball came, and the magnificent ball-dresses, alike for both sisters, were laid ready. They were of white, glistening silk and costly lace, trimmed with green leaves.

Never had Florence suffered more than she did that night. Both sisters were terribly hard to please. They scolded, they were impatient, angry with her; they reproached her with stupidity, with want of taste, with every conceivable fault they could think of, yet feeling all the time as though no one else could have displayed one half the elegance she had done. When the arduous duty of the toilet was accomplished they certainly looked better than any one had ever seen them look before.

"I wish Agatha Moore could see us now," said Mabel, complacently. "She would be astonished."

"Do you wish you were going to the ball?" asked Jane of Florence.

Her face flushed at the question.

"Would you like a dress like this, with real pearls? Would you like to dance in the midst of flowers and lights? Would you like gentlemen to admire you?"

"Yes, I should," faltered Florence.

"Then you will not have it," laughed Miss Jane. "You should go to the ball in those thick shoes and that delectable winsey dress. You would make a picture."

She did not answer, but for one moment her heart grew warm with indignation. Was it fair that these girls should have everything and she have nothing? She was very young, and the bare notion of a dance filled her with delight; but then such amusements were not for her. She must not forget that she was an outcast, all unworthy of such pleasures as fell to the lot of other girls.

"Give me my fan," said Miss Jane. "I hope you have fastened these leaves securely on my dress. You had better remain in the anteroom here, with needle and thread; then, if any little accident happens, I can send at once for you."

Farewell to the only little gleam of enjoyment she had hoped for from the ball; she had thought how much she should like to see the gay dresses of the ladies; but now, while all the household were in the midst of gayety and excitement, she must sit up there in that lonely anteroom and see nothing of it. Obedient and resigned as usual, she took her place; the faint sound of the music came to her; she could hear in the distance the unusual commotion consequent on the number of visitors; then she sat down, content for once to do nothing but think. She was so utterly worn out by her hard work during the last four days that she fell into a deep, dreamless sleep. She was rudely aroused by a message brought to the effect that Miss Jane wanted her to bring a needle and thread immediately—she was waiting for her in the White Room.

The White Room, so called from time immemorial, was a pretty little room leading from the drawing-room. There Florence hastened, and she found Miss Jane in a towering rage.

The ball was a great success; the flowers, lights, and music were all good; the guests were most of them young. Sir Leonard had, as Jane thought, shown himself especially attentive to her—he had asked her to waltz with him, and she was delighted; but at the very beginning of the dance, one of the beautiful sprays of leaves became unfastened and trailed upon the ground; it was impossible to continue. Jane made light of it and smiled, but the very bitterness of rage was in her heart.

"It can be quickly remedied," she said.

And Sir Leonard went with her to the White Room. By her orders he sent a servant to summon Miss Jane's maid.

"We shall have time for the waltz," said Sir Leonard. "I will return for you in five minutes."

"He would have proposed to me, I am sure," said the angry girl to herself, "if we had waltzed together, and then have gone out into the conservatory; it is all the fault of that detestable girl!"

She looked so angrily at Florence that the young girl was frightened at her.

"You have done this on purpose," she said. "You knew these sprays were not fastened; you shall suffer for it. Now then, be quick; I have not one moment to lose!"

But her anger had so embarrassed the poor girl that she was unable to sew with her accustomed quickness. She broke one leaf, and Miss Jane's anger rising to fury, she struck the fair face a sharp blow with her open hand.

"You are doing it on purpose!" she cried; "you stupid, idle, useless girl!"

In her passion and anger she did not see Sir Leonard standing at the door.

He never forgot the scene. The tall, angry, magnificently dressed woman, and the beautiful figure kneeling, in order to stitch more rapidly. He never forgot the blow on that fair, sad, sweet face, or the angry tones of that voice he had been accustomed to hearing singing sweetest music. Not for a thousand worlds could he have spoken to Miss Jane just then.

He had found her; he had spent long days and weeks in searching for her, now he had found her, and she was the slave, the drudge of these proud, unfeeling girls. He even forgot his anger against Miss Jane in his desire to speak to Florence. He retreated unheard, and waited in the corridor until she came out. He saw her face wet with tears, and he went up to her.

"I must see you," he said; "you must not refuse me. I have been looking for you for many weeks; will you pray forgive my asking it? I know that I can not see you in the house; will you meet me in the grounds in ten minutes time from now?"

She raised her sad eyes to his face, and read such infinite pity, such truth, such kindness there that she answered simply:

"Yes, I will."

He returned to the ball-room and saw Miss Jane looking for him with wondering eyes. He was thankful to find the waltz ended. He did not go near her, or speak to her; he thought of the cruel hand and that sweet face, and hated her. He lingered in the ball-room until the next dance began; he saw both the young ladies of the house engaged in it, and then he went out into the grounds.

"What is the matter with your face?" asked Mrs. Morgan, as she met the young girl on the stairs.

"Miss Jane was angry and struck me," was the quiet reply.

The housekeeper was indignant.

"Nay," she said, "that shall not be. You may work and toil for them, but they shall not treat you so. You go to your room, my dear, and if they want you again I will take your place."

She smiled her thanks and went on.

"I don't like that quiet look in her face," said Mrs. Morgan; "that girl will do something desperate some of these days."

CHAPTER X.

FIVE minutes later, and Florence Latour stood out in the grounds of Weston Grange alone, shuddering with fear; her heart still beating at the recollection of that whisper from Sir Leonard, her face flushed with the violence of the blow given by the hand of Miss Jane, and a sense of indignity such treatment called forth. She walked on slowly; the music from the ball-room seemed to float over the trees and flowers; there was a faint light of stars in the sky; the wind was low and hushed. She stood for a few moments under the shade of a large sycamore-tree, and then she heard the sound of hurried footsteps. She looked out timidly from the sheltering leaves, and saw Sir Leonard, evidently at a loss where to seek her. He heard some slight sound, and turning round, saw her—fairer than even his fairest dream of her—waiting for him. One half moment and he was by her side.

"How am I to thank you?" he said. "I did not like to ask you to meet me here, but I had no other alternative. I have spent weeks in looking for you, and now that I have found you I must speak to you; you are not angry?"

She raised her eyes to his face, and their troubled depths touched him.

"Angry! why should I be? I did not know that you would remember me."

"Remember you!" he repeated, with a strange laugh; "how little you know, dear; Heaven! how little you know! Why, I have never forgotten you for one moment, night or day. Your face has haunted me as no other face ever will. I have dreamed of it all night, and thought of it all day. It has come between me and the blue heavens, between me and the fair green earth. Forgotten you! could Adam have forgotten Eve, do you think?"

"But I am not Eve," she said, with a smile.

"You are a thousand times fairer," he cried. "You are my Eve. I never pardon myself for having lost sight of you before I knew either your name or address. I have haunted my neighbors' houses, hoping to find you; I have been everywhere where I thought it possible or probable that you might live; I have made all kinds of inquiries, but could discover nothing of you. I was almost in despair."

"Were you so very anxious to see me again?" she asked, softly, and with an expression of absolute wonder on her beautiful face.

"I was, indeed," he replied, earnestly.

"Why?" she asked, still more surprised.

"Dare I tell you? Will you promise not to be angry with me, nor to think me vain or presumptuous?"

"I could not be angry with you," she replied, gently.

"Then I will tell you. It was because I fell in love with you; because, from the first moment I saw you, I said to myself: 'That is the only woman I shall ever love.' I loved you as much in that one moment as though I had known you all my life."

A light, half divine, came over her face.

"You love me?" she said, softly; "it is impossible."

"You think so. I found it the easiest of all possibilities; in fact, I could not help it. I love you, and I shall love no one else until I die."

"But you do not know me!" she said, hesitatingly.

"I shall know you now," he said.

"I have no name," she continued.

"I have one, and it will serve for us both."

"I have no fortune, no friends; I am alone, helpless, poor, unknown—how can you love me?"

"How can I do anything else?" he asked. "I have money and friends—all that is mine shall be yours, if you will only try to love me."

"You can not mean it?" she said, half doubtfully.

"I do mean it. Listen to me; I do not know that in all my life my lips have ever been stained with one false word—I can safely say I never deliberately told a lie, and I tell you that if you stood now, side by side with a crowned queen, who had all the riches of earth in her clasp, I should choose you, because I love you! You wonder that I should love you, child—do you not know how fair, how sweet, how winsome you are?"

"No, that I do not," she replied; "are you sure?—is it true? Miss Mabel and Miss Jane laugh at me because I am ugly and awkward."

Sir Leonard muttered something not very complimentary to either lady, then he turned to her suddenly.

"Will you tell me who you are?" he asked, abruptly.

The beautiful face bent in low humility before him, the lovely face flushed, a deep sigh came from the sweetest lips.

"I—I can not tell you," she said; "I have no name, no home."

"You live at Weston Grange?" he asked.

"Yes, that is the only home I know; I have no other."

A sudden light seemed to break in upon him.

"Are you the little girl who was brought here years ago by a French nurse, and sent to school by the old squire?"

"Yes," she replied, "I am that most unfortunate child."

"I understand now; I wonder that I did not think of it before. The squire died without a will, and you are left at the mercy of those new people, I suppose—you who remember nothing of father or mother?"

"Yes," she replied, "I am—no one is more so—at the mercy of the world."

"It shall not be for long," he said. "Tell me what name they have given you, sweet."

"I am called Florence Latour," she replied.

"And from the little scene I witnessed to-night, that cruel blow given you by your amiable Miss Jane, it appears to me that they have made you into a kind of waiting-maid; is it so?"

"Yes," she replied, quietly; "I was glad to be useful."

"We will find what the women's rights people call 'another mission' for you, sweet. Now tell me all the story of your life as far back as you can remember. Lay your dear hands in mine, and have no fear."

She told him just as he wished, and he thought it the saddest, sweetest story he had ever heard.

"Florence," he said, when she had quite finished, "if you will trust yourself to me, I will make the rest of your life as happy as before it has been sad. I can not expect you to love me all at once, and I am loath to ask you to meet me here clandestinely; but there is no alternative."

She looked at him so wistfully he wondered what thought was troubling her.

"I thought," she said, "that you loved either Miss Mabel or Miss Jane; they think so."

"They can not think so, Florence; I have never even hinted at such a thing. I was disposed to admire Miss Jane for her singing, but for her cruelty to you to-night I shall detest her. You see, Florence, it is useless and hopeless for me to think of seeing you in the house. Will you come out here to meet me? When you have learned to love me, I shall go to Mr. Harcourt and ask his permission to make you my wife."

"You love me so much as that?" she said.

"So much—and more; more than words can tell. Now, will you try and be happy? Your penance will not last much longer. When they are unkind to you, remember how dearly I love you, and how soon, if you will, you can be my wife."

"I will remember," she said.

"Florence, sweet, before we part let me kiss your face; that will stamp you mine."

She raised her fair face with the innocent grace of a child, and as he kissed it he murmured such words of love as made her very heart glad.

And that was how the ball, on which Mrs. Harcourt had raised such ambitious hopes, ended.

CHAPTER XI.

"I CAN NOT imagine what has happened to that girl," said Jane to Mabel. "She has seemed to me quite changed ever since the day of the ball. She looks so absurdly happy; she has such a color in her face; such brightness in her eyes. Something has happened, Mabel. What do you think it is?"

"I have no thoughts for such a trifling subject; the girl may look happy or not, just as she pleases. If I try to guess anything, it will be why Sir Leonard Falconer never comes near us. He has only called once since the ball, and then it was a visit of ceremony; he did not speak five words to me."

"Or to me," added Jane. "How mortifying it would be if he meant nothing after all."

"He dare not trifle with us!" said Mabel, with great dignity; "you forget our position. There is one comfort—if he has not been to see us, at least he has not been anywhere else. I heard that absurd Cecilia Broughton wondering yesterday what had become of him. It is disgusting to see girls so openly anxious as the Broughtons are about Sir Leonard."

There was a slight rap at the door. Miss Jane said, "Enter;" and Florence, with some white lace that she had been repairing, came in.

"I hope this will do," she said, placing it before Miss Mabel. "I have tried to keep to the pattern."

"It looks very clumsy," said Mabel, though in reality she thought it charmingly done.

But no flush came to the lovely face at those unkind words. The joyous light did not die from the beautiful eyes. The young girl turned to quit the room.

"Stay here," said Jane, harshly; "I want the leaves of this book mended."

Cheerful and obedient as ever, the girl sat down, and very soon the white slender fingers were busy with the misplaced leaves.

Then Mabel, remembering what her sister had said, looked attentively at her. For the first time she felt alarmed and jealous at the wonderful loveliness that had never struck her before. That fair face was radiant with a light and brightness she had never seen on it before; the violet eyes were full of light and deep-seated happiness unutterably content. The sweet lips were tremulous with smiles.

"You look too happy and too well cared for," thought Miss Mabel; "you have some secret of your own that you are keeping from us, but we shall find it out."

Her reverie was abruptly broken by a shrill cry from Jane.

"Mabel, look!—there is Sir Leonard riding up the avenue! I am so glad! Let us dress and go down!"

They did not see how the lovely young face bent over the leaves flushed deepest crimson, or how the white fingers trembled; they might have guessed a secret if they had done so.

Before the dresses were arranged and the toilet completed, Mrs. Harcourt entered the room, flushed, smiling and complacent.

"Something is about to happen, girls, I am sure! Sir Leonard is here, and he has requested a private interview with papa in the library—we all know what that means! Only one thing puzzles me—which of you is it, my dears? I really can not decide."

Which singularly abrupt question led to a somewhat acrimonious conversation between the two young ladies; they said things that, despite her most desperate resolves, brought a smile to the lips of Florence; and Mrs. Harcourt, happening most unfortunately to see one of those smiles, commenced a violent tirade against the insolence of paupers. It was interrupted by a summons from Mr. Harcourt, who wished to speak to her at once.

"We shall soon know now, my dears," said the lady. "Pray do not allow any trace of ill-feeling to interfere with Sir Leonard's happiness."

But the battle was renewed most fiercely when Mrs. Harcourt had gone away. How it would have terminated had Sir Leonard really asked for one or the other will never be known; the astounding intelligence that reached them made them friends in a common cause.

Mrs. Harcourt entered the library with an air of winning ease and dignity that she really believed irresistible, "a smile that was gracious and broad;" but the smile faded abruptly when she saw no one but her husband, and he was looking more surprised, more frightened, more miserable than she had ever seen him look before. He gazed at her in silence, then spread out his hands with a gesture that signified unusual ruin and desolation.

"What is the matter?" cried his wife. "Why can you not speak—why do you stand looking so foolish?"

"My dear," said the little man, "I—I really dare not tell you. . I am overwhelmed!"

"Will you have the goodness to tell me what you mean, and what has happened?" said Mrs. Harcourt, resolutely.

She drew near him with such an unflinching expression of face that his fright increased.

"Sir Leonard Falconer has been here, and he has proposed—"

"Of course," said the lady, with a gratified smile, "I knew it. I am right proud of it. No need to make this absurd fuss—only tell me which of my darlings it is? The dear girls themselves do not seem to know—we must not keep them in suspense."

"He has proposed for Florence Latour, and insists on marrying her."

"What!" shrieked the lady. "Say that again!"

The unhappy gentleman repeated the words, and his wife's rage knew no bounds.

"That deceitful, cunning intruder! Where has he seen her? How does he know her? Did you tell him what she was?"

"I did. I made the worst of her, you may be sure. He looked so fierce that I really thought he was going to kill me. It is all of no use; he means to marry her, and we can not prevent it."

"I will prevent it!—she shall go this moment!—she shall not remain in this house another hour!"

"Then he will marry her all the sooner—he said so; he said that, without doubt, we should oppose the marriage; if so, his friend, Lady Broughton, should at once fetch the girl away, and he would marry her at once; but if, on the contrary, everything was peaceable and friendly, he proposed that he should marry her from here in a month from now."

"That he never shall! How am I to bear this? If you had but the spirit of a man you would have prevented it!"

"How could I prevent it, my dear?"

"Pray do not talk to me!—pray do not irritate me! I am almost mad to think of such a chance lost!"

But, after a long conversation, the irate lady, who was not without sense, saw that nothing was to be gained by quarreling with Sir Leonard.

"Our neighbors would all laugh at us," said her husband; "they would know we were disappointed; and to be on bad terms with Sir Leonard and Lady Falconer, of Falcon's Court, might be a great disadvantage to us."

"Pray do not call that upstart Lady Falconer," said Mrs. Harcourt, with lofty contempt.

"She will be Lady Falconer, let us say what we may. It strikes me that it would be very bad policy on the part of the girls to quarrel with her."

"Do you assure me that he knows what she is by birth and training, Mr. Harcourt?"

"Plainly as the plainest English could tell him, my dear."

"I will make her suffer; she shall have such a month as she shall remember, let her live long as she may!"

And, with those words, Mrs. Harcourt left her husband to his own reflections, and returned to the room where she had left her daughters. They looked up eagerly as she entered.

"What news, mamma?" they both cried.

She sunk in a chair and held up her hands.

"Such horror, my dear children—I am so grieved for poor Sir Leonard."

"Which of us is it, mamma?" asked Jane, who was never impressed by her mother's dramatic rehearsals.

"Neither, my dear children. Poor Sir Leonard, the heir of an ancient race, the head of a proud family, the bearer of a stainless name, has been imposed upon by the cunning arts of a low, base-born adventuress, and not thinking of the shame he will draw upon himself, he has degraded himself so far as to offer to marry a girl without a name!"

"Do you mean Florence, mamma?" asked Miss Jane, growing very pale.

"I do, my dear; my contempt for her cunning can not be expressed, my sorrow for Sir Leonard may. Oh, my dear, betrayed children, let this teach you never to imitate my fatal kindness, and take a creature of that description under your roof. See what a return she has made to us; think of her treachery and—shudder."

Florence rose white and trembling She stood erect and dauntless before the angry lady.

"I used no cunning," she said; "I know none. Sir Leonard saw me and honored me with his love. I did not seek to win it."

"Without doubt her mother inveigled the squire's poor brother in the same way," said Mrs. Harcourt to her daughters.

"If you ever repeat that remark I will leave your house the next moment!" cried Florence. "You shall not insult my mother or her memory!"

A low, contemptuous laugh from the three ladies.

"The Falconers will boast of a bar sinister for the first time," said Jane, savagely.

And Florence looked at her with calm, serene eyes.

"Sir Leonard's love so honors me," she said, "that, like the love of a king, it supplies all deficiencies in a subject," and with these words she left them to give vent to their spite and fury as they would.

CHAPTER XII.

In one respect Mrs. Harcourt certainly kept her word. She positively tortured Florence, not by any act of violence that might have told tales, but by words so cruel, so bitter, so shameful, the girl's heart was almost broken.

"I shall come to see you once a week, Florence," said her lover, "not oftener, for I have a dim idea that each visit of mine causes you to suffer much; the month will soon be over, and then my darling shall never know a dark day again."

He told her how busy they were at Falcon's Court, preparing for the fairest bride who had ever been taken there. He described the rooms that had been arranged for her; the gorgeous *trousseau* he had ordered from Paris; and she listened, wondering in her sweet humility, how it was she was blessed by his wonderful, generous love.

He told her, laughingly, one day, that after all it was better to suffer a little than to have a public scandal.

"I should like, you know, darling," he said, "to take you away to Lady Broughton's; you would be very happy there, and I could see you every day; but it would create a great scandal that afterward we should not like to remember. If you are married from here, and your amiable young ladies are brides-maids, it will make our future intercourse easier and a little more agreeable."

She was sensible enough to see it; and, to do her justice, she never complained to him. He had not the most remote idea of the daily and hourly torture she underwent, or he would never have allowed it.

He had begged of Mrs. Harcourt not to disturb herself by making any arrangements about the wedding. There need not be any breakfast provided; they would have a grand *déjeuner* on their return, instead.

"Lady Broughton," he added, "had kindly consented to allow her daughters to act as bride-maids, and he hoped the Misses Harcourt would join them. To save all trouble, he would send to Paris for suitable costumes."

Magnificent dresses, free of all cost, were irresistible to Mrs. Harcourt.

"If Lady Broughton does not think her daughters compromised by appearing at such a wedding," she said, "it would ill become me to refuse. I know my dear girls will not like it; they have always been so very select."

Sir Leonard laughed good-naturedly, making allowance for any ebullition of ill-temper. If he had known what the girl he loved suffered, he would never have smiled in or entered that house again.

She was sensitive, loving, and gentle, so that it was easy to torture her; weak words could never tell what they made her suffer; the mock respect, the mock homage, the cruel scorn, the bitter insults, the taunts that made her heart quiver as though some sharp knife had pierced it, the pity they lavished on Sir Leonard. There were times when she felt that she could not bear it—that she must tell him; then the remembrance of his wish came over her, and she would try again.

She could not have endured it but for the constant kindness of the old housekeeper, and the bright future that shone before her; she suffered so greatly and so constantly that there were times when she thought this future must be a dream. Could it be possible that she, the down-trodden, insulted, helpless dependent, would soon be Lady Falconer, wife of one of the wealthiest, kindest, and most noble men in England, mistress of Falcon's Court? It did not seem possible or probable.

There was but a fortnight now until her wedding-day, and their unkindness increased with each hour. She was no longer allowed to sit in the anteroom—her own room was the only place of refuge. When she was driven almost mad with taunts and insults, she would, at times, go into one of the unused lumber-rooms, and sit there for long hours.

One morning Mrs. Harcourt had been especially violent and ill-tempered; the young ladies had been so insulting that human nature could endure it no longer. Florence left them, and went to her old haunt, the lumber-rooms; they were full of old furniture, boxes, manuscripts, books, pictures, and papers of every possible description.

"I will not go near them again to-day," thought Florence. "I will amuse myself by looking at these old pictures."

She was turning them over when she saw a small packet of letters and papers addressed to the late squire. She knew her father's handwriting, and, without stopping to think, opened it.

Thank Heaven! for she found there her mother's marriage certificate, for William Beauchamp had indeed married the pretty girl who had attracted him; he had married her at the parish church of St. Roche, in Falaise, France; and there was, besides, the certificate of her birth, Florence, the infant child of William Beauchamp and of Rose Hampton, his wife; there was a certificate of her mother's death, and these were all inclosed in a letter from William Beauchamp to his brother the squire. In the letter William told his brother he had loved the school-master's daughter so dearly that he had married her, but that dreading his brother's anger, he had kept the marriage secret; that the child, Florence, was indeed his legitimate, lawful daughter; he begged the squire to forgive him, and to acknowledge his daughter as heiress of Weston Grange.

That was the packet the French nurse had brought with her, and the old squire, in his anger, had thrown away without reading. They had been picked up by one of the servants, who, believing them useless, had thrown them, with others, in the lumber-room.

The first thing she did was to thank Heaven, not for the wealth that would be hers, but that her mother's name was free from reproach, and the burden that had so long weighed on her young heart had fallen from it now forever. She sent a note to her lover, and when he came, she placed the papers in his hand.

"I shall not disgrace you, Leonard," she said, "and I am so thankful. Help me to thank Heaven!"

Sir Leonard, with all his romance, was very practical. The first thing he did was to go to France and verify the certificates. He found there the old curé who had celebrated the marriage, and the witnesses who had attended it, so that Florence was indeed Florence Beauchamp, heiress of Weston Grange. As a matter of course, the Harcourts opposed her, and the case came on for trial, when it was decided at once in her favor.

But she was too generous to trample on a fallen foe. By Sir Leonard's consent she kept Weston Grange, but she divided the annual income received from it into two equal parts, the half of which was settled on the Harcourts.

Yet, in spite of her generosity, they hated her. More than once Sir Leonard was obliged to threaten them, they said such scandalous things of her; but people only laughed at them; they understood the mean spite and jealousy that actuated each word.

No one is more beloved than Lady Falconer—no one so much admired. Her second son is to inherit the Grange, and Mrs. Morgan lives there still—"keeping it ready for him," as she laughingly says.

Mabel married a wealthy old merchant, whose later years she made miserable. Jane conquered a young curate, and he did penance for the rest of his life. The sisters disagree about everything when they do meet, except in abusing the lady loved and revered by all who know her—Lady Falconer, of Falcon's Court.

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975	A Dark Marriage Morn	20
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982	The Duke's Secret	20
985	On Her Wedding Morn, and The Mystery of the Holly-Tree	20
988	The Shattered Idol, and Letty Leigh	20
990	The Earl's Error, and Arnold's Promise	20
995	An Unnatural Bondage, and That Beautiful Lady	20
1006	His Wife's Judgment	20

Charlotte M. Braeme's Works
(CONTINUED.)

1008	A Thorn in Her Heart	20
1010	Golden Gates	20
1012	A Nameless Sin	20
1014	A Mad Love	20
1031	Irene's Vow	20
1052	Signa's Sweetheart	20

Charlotte Bronte's Works.

15	Jane Eyre	20
57	Shirley	20
944	The Professor	20

Rhoda Broughton's Works.

86	Belinda	20
101	Second Thoughts	20
227	Nancy	20
645	Mrs. Smith of Longmains	10
758	"Good-bye, Sweetheart!"	20
765	Not Wisely, But Too Well	20
767	Joan	20
768	Red as a Rose is She	20
769	Cometh Up as a Flower	20
862	Betty's Visions	10
894	Doctor Cupid	20

Mary E. Bryan's Works.

731	The Bayou Bride	20
857	Kildee; or, The Sphinx of the Red House. 1st half	20
857	Kildee; or, The Sphinx of the Red House. 2d half	20

Robert Buchanan's Works.

145	"Storm-Beaten:" God and The Man	20
154	Annan Water	20
181	The New Abelard	10
398	Matt: A Tale of a Caravan	10
646	The Master of the Mine	20
892	That Winter Night; or, Love's Victory	10

Captain Fred Burnaby's Works.

375	A Ride to Khiva	20
384	On Horseback Through Asia Minor	20

E. Fairfax Byrrne's Works.

521	Entangled	20
538	A Fair Country Maid	20

Hall Caine's Works.

445	The Shadow of a Crime	20
520	She's All the World to Me	10

Mrs. H. Lovett Cameron's Works.

595	A North Country Maid	20
796	In a Grass Country	20
891	Vera Nevill; or, Poor Wisdom's Chance	20
912	Pure Gold. 1st half	20
912	Pure Gold. 2d half	20
963	Worth Winning	20
1025	Daisy's Dilemma	20

Rosa Nouchette Carey's Works.

215	Not Like Other Girls	20
396	Robert Ord's Atonement	20
551	Barbara Heathcote's Trial. 1st half	20
551	Barbara Heathcote's Trial. 2d half	20
608	For Lilias. 1st half	20
608	For Lilias. 2d half	20
930	Uncle Max. 1st half	20
930	Uncle Max. 2d half	20
932	Queenie's Whim. 1st half	20
932	Queenie's Whim. 2d half	20
934	Wooed and Married. 1st half	20
934	Wooed and Married. 2d half	20
936	Nellie's Memories. 1st half	20
936	Nellie's Memories. 2d half	20
961	Wee Wifie	20
1033	Esther: A Story for Girls	20

Lewis Carroll's Works.

462	Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. Illustrated by John Tenniel	20
789	Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There. Illustrated by John Tenniel	20

Wilkie Collins's Works.

52	The New Magdalen	10
102	The Moonstone	20
167	Heart and Science	20
168	No Thoroughfare. By Dickens and Collins	10
175	Love's Random Shot, and Other Stories	10
233	"I Say No;" or, The Love-Letter Answered	20
508	The Girl at the Gate	10
591	The Queen of Hearts	20
613	The Ghost's Touch, and Percy and the Prophet	10
623	My Lady's Money	10
701	The Woman in White. 1st half	20
701	The Woman in White. 2d half	20
702	Man and Wife. 1st half	20
702	Man and Wife. 2d half	20
764	The Evil Genius	20
896	The Guilty River	20
946	The Dead Secret	20
977	The Haunted Hotel	20
1029	Armadale. 1st half	20
1029	Armadale. 2d half	20

Mabel Collins's Works.

749	Lord Vanecourt's Daughter	20
828	The Prettiest Woman in Warsaw	20

Hugh Conway's Works.

240	Called Back	10
251	The Daughter of the Stars, and Other Tales	10
301	Dark Days	10
302	The Blatchford Bequest	10
502	Carriston's Gift	10
525	Paul Vargas, and Other Stories	10

Hugh Conway's Works
(CONTINUED.)

543	A Family Affair	20
601	Slings and Arrows, and Other Stories	10
711	A Cardinal Sin	20
804	Living or Dead	20
830	Bound by a Spell	20

J. Fenimore Cooper's Works.

60	The Last of the Mohicans	20
63	The Spy	20
309	The Pathfinder	20
310	The Prairie	20
318	The Pioneers; or, The Sources of the Susquehanna	20
349	The Two Admirals	20
359	The Water-Witch	20
361	The Red Rover	20
373	Wing and Wing	20
378	Homeward Bound; or, The Chase	20
379	Home as Found. (Sequel to "Homeward Bound")	20
380	Wyandotte; or, The Hutted Knoll	20
385	The Headsman; or, The Abbaye des Vignerons	20
394	The Bravo	20
397	Lionel Lincoln; or, The Leaguer of Boston	20
400	The Wept of Wish-Ton-Wish	20
413	Afloat and Ashore	20
414	Miles Wallingford. (Sequel to "Afloat and Ashore")	20
415	The Ways of the Hour	20
416	Jack Tier; or, The Florida Reef	20
419	The Chainbearer; or, The Littlepage Manuscripts	20
420	Satanstoe; or, The Littlepage Manuscripts	20
421	The Redskins; or, Indian and Injin. Being the conclusion of the Littlepage Manuscripts	20
422	Precaution	20
423	The Sea Lions; or, The Lost Sealers	20
424	Mercedes of Castile; or, The Voyage to Cathay	20
425	The Oak-Openings; or, The Bee-Hunter	20
431	The Monikins	20

Georgiana M. Craik's Works.

450	Godfrey Helstone	20
606	Mrs. Hollyer	20

B. M. Croker's Works.

207	Pretty Miss Neville	20
260	Proper Pride	10
412	Some One Else	20

May Crommelin's Works.

452	In the West Countrie	20
619	Joy; or, The Light of Cold-Home Ford	20
647	Goblin Gold	10

Alphonse Daudet's Works.

534	Jack	20
574	The Nabob: A Story of Parisian Life and Manners	20

Charles Dickens's Works.

10	The Old Curiosity Shop	20
22	David Copperfield. Vol. I	20
22	David Copperfield. Vol. II	20
24	Pickwick Papers. Vol. I	20
24	Pickwick Papers. Vol. II	20
37	Nicholas Nickleby. First half	20
37	Nicholas Nickleby. Second half	20
41	Oliver Twist	20
77	A Tale of Two Cities	20
84	Hard Times	10
91	Barnaby Rudge. 1st half	20
91	Barnaby Rudge. 2d half	20
94	Little Dorrit. First half	20
94	Little Dorrit. Second half	20
106	Bleak House. First half	20
106	Bleak House. Second half	20
107	Dombey and Son. 1st half	20
107	Dombey and Son. 2d half	20
108	The Cricket on the Hearth, and Doctor Marigold	10
131	Our Mutual Friend. (1st half)	20
131	Our Mutual Friend. (2d half)	20
132	Master Humphrey's Clock	10
152	The Uncommercial Traveler	20
168	No Thoroughfare. By Dickens and Collins	10
169	The Haunted Man	10
437	Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit. First half	20
437	Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit. Second half	20
439	Great Expectations	20
440	Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings	10
447	American Notes	20
448	Pictures From Italy, and The Mudfog Papers, &c	20
454	The Mystery of Edwin Drood	20
456	Sketches by Boz. Illustrative of Every-day Life and Every-day People	20
676	A Child's History of England	20

Sarah Doudney's Works.

338	The Family Difficulty	10
679	Where Two Ways Meet	10

F. Du Boisgobey's Works.

82	Sealed Lips	20
104	The Coral Pin. 1st half	20
104	The Coral Pin. 2d half	20
264	Piédouche, a French Detective	10
328	Babiole, the Pretty Milliner. First half	20
328	Babiole, the Pretty Milliner. Second half	20
453	The Lottery Ticket	20
475	The Prima Donna's Husband	20
522	Zig-Zag, the Clown; or, The Steel Gauntlets	20
523	The Consequences of a Duel. A Parisian Romance	20
648	The Angel of the Bells	20

F. Du Boisgobey's Works

(CONTINUED.)

697	The Pretty Jailer. 1st half	20
697	The Pretty Jailer. 2d half	20
699	The Sculptor's Daughter. 1st half	20
699	The Sculptor's Daughter. 2d half	20
782	The Closed Door. 1st half	20
782	The Closed Door. 2d half	20
851	The Cry of Blood. 1st half	20
851	The Cry of Blood. 2d half	20
918	The Red Band. 1st half	20
918	The Red Band. 2d half	20
942	Cash on Delivery	20

"The Duchess's" Works.

2	Molly Bawn	20
6	Portia	20
14	Airy Fairy Lilian	10
16	Phyllis	20
25	Mrs. Geoffrey. (Large type edition)	20
950	Mrs. Geoffrey	10
29	Beauty's Daughters	10
30	Faith and Unfaith	20
118	Loys, Lord Berresford, and Eric Dering	10
119	Monica, and A Rose Distill'd	10
123	Sweet is True Love	10
129	Rossmoyne	10
134	The Witching Hour, and Other Stories	10
136	"That Last Rehearsal," and Other Stories	10
166	Moonshine and Marguerites	10
171	Fortune's Wheel, and Other Stories	10
284	Doris	10
312	A Week's Amusement; or, A Week in Killarney	10
342	The Baby, and One New Year's Eve	10
390	Mildred Trevanion	10
404	In Durance Vile, and Other Stories	10
486	Dick's Sweetheart	20
494	A Maiden All Forlorn, and Barbara	10
517	A Passive Crime, and Other Stories	10
541	"As It Fell Upon a Day."	10
733	Lady Branksmere	20
771	A Mental Struggle	20
785	The Haunted Chamber	10
862	Ugly Barrington	10
875	Lady Valworth's Diamonds	20
1009	In an Evil Hour, and Other Stories	20
1016	A Modern Circe	20
1035	The Duchess	20

Alexander Dumas's Works.

55	The Three Guardsmen	20
75	Twenty Years After	20
259	The Bride of Monte-Cristo. A Sequel to "The Count of Monte-Cristo"	10
262	The Count of Monte-Cristo. Part I	30
262	The Count of Monte-Cristo. Part II	30
717	Beau Tancrede; or, The Marriage Verdict	20

George Ebers's Works.

474	Serapis. An Historical Novel	20
983	Uarda	20
1056	The Bride of the Nile. 1st half	20
1056	The Bride of the Nile. 2d half	20

Maria Edgeworth's Works.

708	Ormond	20
788	The Absentee. An Irish Story.	20

Mrs. Annie Edwards's Works.

644	A Girton Girl	20
834	A Ballroom Repentance	20
835	Vivian the Beauty	20
836	A Point of Honor	20
837	A Vagabond Heroine	10
838	Ought We to Visit Her?	20
839	Leah: A Woman of Fashion	20
841	Jet: Her Face or Her Fortune?	10
842	A Blue-Stocking	10
843	Archie Lovell	20
844	Susan Fielding	20
845	Philip Earnscliffe; or, The Morals of May Fair	20
846	Steven Lawrence. First half.	20
846	Steven Lawrence. Second half	20
850	A Playwright's Daughter	10

George Eliot's Works.

3	The Mill on the Floss	20
31	Middlemarch. 1st half	20
31	Middlemarch. 2d half	20
34	Daniel Deronda. 1st half	20
34	Daniel Deronda. 2d half	20
36	Adam Bede. 1st half	20
36	Adam Bede. 2d half	20
42	Romola	20
693	Felix Holt, the Radical	20
707	Silas Marner: The Weaver of Raveloe	10
728	Janet's Repentance	10
762	Impressions of Theophrastus Such	10

B. L. Farjeon's Works.

179	Little Make-Believe	10
573	Love's Harvest	20
607	Self-Doomed	10
616	The Sacred Nugget	20
657	Christmas Angel	10
907	The Bright Star of Life	20
909	The Nine of Hearts	20

G. Manville Fenn's Works.

193	The Rosery Folk	10
558	Poverty Corner	20
587	The Parson o' Dumford	20
609	The Dark House	10

Octave Feuillet's Works.

66 The Romance of a Poor Young Man.......... 10
386 Led Astray; or, "La Petite Comtesse"........ 10

Mrs. Forrester's Works.

80 June.......... 20
280 Omnia Vanitas. A Tale of Society.......... 10
484 Although He Was a Lord, and Other Tales.......... 10
715 I Have Lived and Loved.......... 20
721 Dolores.......... 20
724 My Lord and My Lady.......... 20
726 My Hero.......... 20
727 Fair Women.......... 20
729 Mignon.......... 20
732 From Olympus to Hades.......... 20
734 Viva.......... 20
736 Roy and Viola.......... 20
740 Rhona.......... 20
744 Diana Carew; or, For a Woman's Sake.......... 20
883 Once Again.......... 20

Jessie Fothergill's Works.

314 Peril.......... 20
572 Healey.......... 20
935 Borderland.......... 20

R. E. Francillon's Works.

135 A Great Heiress: A Fortune in Seven Checks.......... 10
319 Face to Face: A Fact in Seven Fables.......... 10
360 Ropes of Sand.......... 20
656 The Golden Flood. By R. E. Francillon and Wm. Senior.. 10
911 Golden Bells.......... 20

Emile Gaboriau's Works.

7 File No. 113.......... 20
12 Other People's Money.......... 20
20 Within an Inch of His Life... 20
26 Monsieur Lecoq. Vol I....... 20
26 Monsieur Lecoq. Vol. II..... 20
33 The Clique of Gold.......... 20
38 The Widow Lerouge.......... 20
43 The Mystery of Orcival.......... 20
144 Promises of Marriage.......... 10
979 The Count's Secret. Part I... 20
979 The Count's Secret. Part II.. 20
1002 Marriage at a Venture.......... 20
1015 A Thousand Francs Reward.. 20

Charles Gibbon's Works.

64 A Maiden Fair.......... 10
317 By Mead and Stream.......... 20

James Grant's Works.

566 The Royal Highlanders; or, The Black Watch in Egypt... 20
781 The Secret Dispatch.......... 10

Miss Grant's Works.

222 The Sun-Maid.......... 20
555 Cara Roma.......... 20

Arthur Griffiths's Works.

614 No. 99.......... 10
680 Fast and Loose.......... 20

H. Rider Haggard's Works.

432 The Witch's Head . 20
753 King Solomon's Mines.......... 20
910 She: A History of Adventure. 20
941 Jess.......... 20
959 Dawn.......... 20
989 Allan Quatermain.......... 20
1049 A Tale of Three Lions, and On Going Back.......... 20

Thomas Hardy's Works.

139 The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid.......... 10
530 A Pair of Blue Eyes.......... 20
690 Far From the Madding Crowd 20
791 The Mayor of Casterbridge.... 20
945 The Trumpet-Major.......... 20
957 The Woodlanders.......... 20

John B. Harwood's Works.

143 One False, Both Fair.......... 20
358 Within the Clasp.......... 20

Mary Cecil Hay's Works.

65 Back to the Old Home.......... 10
72 Old Myddelton's Money.......... 20
196 Hidden Perils.......... 20
197 For Her Dear Sake.......... 20
224 The Arundel Motto.......... 20
281 The Squire's Legacy.......... 20
290 Nora's Love Test.......... 20
408 Lester's Secret.......... 20
678 Dorothy's Venture.......... 20
716 Victor and Vanquished.......... 20
849 A Wicked Girl.......... 20
987 Brenda Yorke.......... 20
1026 A Dark Inheritance.......... 20

Mrs. Cashel-Hoey's Works.

313 The Lover's Creed.......... 20
802 A Stern Chase.......... 20

Tighe Hopkins's Works.

509 Nell Haffenden.......... 20
714 'Twixt Love and Duty.......... 20

Works by the Author of "Judith Wynne."

332 Judith Wynne.......... 20
506 Lady Lovelace.......... 20

William H. G. Kingston's Works.

117 A Tale of the Shore and Ocean. 20
133 Peter the Whaler.......... 10
761 Will Weatherhelm.......... 20
763 The Midshipman, Marmaduke Merry.......... 20

Vernon Lee's Works.

399	Miss Brown	20
859	Ottilie: An Eighteenth Century Idyl. By Vernon Lee. The Prince of the 100 Soups. Edited by Vernon Lee	20

Charles Lever's Works.

191	Harry Lorrequer	20
212	Charles O'Malley, the Irish Dragoon. First half	20
212	Charles O'Malley, the Irish Dragoon. Second half	20
243	Tom Burke of "Ours." First half	20
243	Tom Burke of "Ours." Second half	20

Mary Linskill's Works.

473	A Lost Son	20
620	Between the Heather and the Northern Sea	20

Mrs. E. Lynn Linton's Works.

122	Ione Stewart	20
817	Stabbed in the Dark	10
886	Paston Carew, Millionaire and Miser	20

Samuel Lover's Works.

663	Handy Andy	20
664	Rory O'More	20

Sir E. Bulwer Lytton's Works.

40	The Last Days of Pompeii	20
83	A Strange Story	20
90	Ernest Maltravers	20
130	The Last of the Barons. First half	20
130	The Last of the Barons. Second half	20
162	Eugene Aram	20
164	Leila; or, The Siege of Grenada	10
650	Alice; or, The Mysteries. (A Sequel to "Ernest Maltravers")	20
720	Paul Clifford	20

George Macdonald's Works.

282	Donal Grant	20
325	The Portent	10
326	Phantastes. A Faerie Romance for Men and Women	10
722	What's Mine's Mine	20
1041	Home Again	20

Katharine S. Macquoid's Works.

479	Louisa	20
914	Joan Wentworth	20

E. Marlitt's Works.

652	The Lady with the Rubies	20
858	Old Ma'm'selle's Secret	20
972	Gold Elsie	20
999	The Second Wife	20

Florence Marryat's Works.

159	Captain Norton's Diary, and A Moment of Madness	10
183	Old Contrairy, and Other Stories	10
208	The Ghost of Charlotte Cray, and Other Stories	10
276	Under the Lilies and Roses	10
444	The Heart of Jane Warner	20
449	Peeress and Player	20
689	The Heir Presumptive	20
825	The Master Passion	20
860	Her Lord and Master	20
861	My Sister the Actress	20
863	"My Own Child."	20
864	"No Intentions."	20
865	Written in Fire	20
866	Miss Harrington's Husband; or, Spiders of Society	20
867	The Girls of Feversham	20
868	Petronel	20
869	The Poison of Asps	10
870	Out of His Reckoning	10
872	With Cupid's Eyes	20
873	A Harvest of Wild Oats	20
877	Facing the Footlights	20
893	Love's Conflict. 1st half	20
893	Love's Conflict. 2d half	20
895	A Star and a Heart	10
897	Ange	20
899	A Little Stepson	10
901	A Lucky Disappointment	10
903	Phyllida	20
905	The Fair-Haired Alda	20
939	Why Not?	20
993	Fighting the Air	20
998	Open Sesame	20
1004	Mad Dumaresq	20
1013	The Confessions of Gerald Estcourt	20
1022	Driven to Bay	20

Captain Marryat's Works.

88	The Privateersman	20
272	The Little Savage	10
991	Mr. Midshipman Easy	20

Helen B. Mathers's Works.

13	Eyre's Acquittal	10
221	Comin' Thro' the Rye	20
438	Found Out	10
535	Murder or Manslaughter?	10
673	Story of a Sin	20
713	"Cherry Ripe"	20
795	Sam's Sweetheart	20
798	The Fashion of this World	10
799	My Lady Green Sleeves	20

Justin McCarthy's Works.

121	Maid of Athens	20
602	Camiola	20
685	England Under Gladstone. 1880—1885	20
747	Our Sensation Novel. Edited by Justin H. McCarthy, M.P.	10
779	Doom! An Atlantic Episode	10

Mrs. Alex. McVeigh Miller's Works.

267	Laurel Vane; or, The Girls' Conspiracy	20
268	Lady Gay's Pride; or, The Miser's Treasure	20
269	Lancaster's Choice	20
316	Sworn to Silence; or, Aline Rodney's Secret	20

Jean Middlemas's Works.

155	Lady Muriel's Secret	20
539	Silvermead	20

Alan Muir's Works.

172	"Golden Girls"	20
346	Tumbledown Farm	10

Miss Mulock's Works.

11	John Halifax, Gentleman. 1st half	20
11	John Halifax, Gentleman. 2d half	20
245	Miss Tommy, and In a House-Boat	10
808	King Arthur. Not a Love Story	20
1018	Two Marriages	20
1038	Mistress and Maid	20
1053	Young Mrs. Jardine	20

David Christie Murray's Works.

58	By the Gate of the Sea	10
195	"The Way of the World"	20
320	A Bit of Human Nature	10
661	Rainbow Gold	20
674	First Person Singular	20
691	Valentine Strange	20
695	Hearts: Queen, Knave, and Deuce	20
698	A Life's Atonement	20
737	Aunt Rachel	10
826	Cynic Fortune	20
898	Bulldog and Butterfly, and Julia and Her Romeo	20

Works by the author of "My Ducats and My Daughter."

376	The Crime of Christmas Day	10
596	My Ducats and My Daughter	20

W. E. Norris's Works.

184	Thirlby Hall	20
277	A Man of His Word	10
355	That Terrible Man	10
500	Adrian Vidal	20
824	Her Own Doing	10
848	My Friend Jim	20
871	A Bachelor's Blunder	20
1019	Major and Minor. 1st half	20
1019	Major and Minor. 2d half	20

Laurence Oliphant's Works.

47	Altiora Peto	20
537	Piccadilly	10

Mrs. Oliphant's Works.

45	A Little Pilgrim	10
177	Salem Chapel	20
205	The Minister's Wife	20
321	The Prodigals, and Their Inheritance	10
337	Memoirs and Resolutions of Adam Graeme of Mossgray, including some Chronicles of the Borough of Fendie	20
345	Madam	20
351	The House on the Moor	20
357	John	20
370	Lucy Crofton	10
371	Margaret Maitland	20
377	Magdalen Hepburn: A Story of the Scottish Reformation	20
402	Lilliesleaf; or, Passages in the Life of Mrs. Margaret Maitland of Sunnyside	20
410	Old Lady Mary	10
527	The Days of My Life	20
528	At His Gates	20
568	The Perpetual Curate	20
569	Harry Muir	20
603	Agnes. 1st half	20
603	Agnes. 2d half	20
604	Innocent. 1st half	20
604	Innocent. 2d half	20
605	Ombra	20
645	Oliver's Bride	10
655	The Open Door, and The Portrait	10
687	A Country Gentleman	20
703	A House Divided Against Itself	20
710	The Greatest Heiress in England	20
827	Effie Ogilvie	20
880	The Son of His Father	20
902	A Poor Gentleman	20

"Ouida's" Works.

4	Under Two Flags	20
9	Wanda, Countess von Szalras	20
116	Moths	20
128	Afternoon, and Other Sketches	10
226	Friendship	20
228	Princess Napraxine	20
238	Pascarel	20
239	Signa	20
433	A Rainy June	10
639	Othmar. 1st half	20
639	Othmar. 2d half	20
671	Don Gesualdo	10
672	In Maremma. First half	20
672	In Maremma. Second half	20
874	A House Party	10
974	Strathmore; or, Wrought by His Own Hand. First half	20
974	Strathmore; or, Wrought by His Own Hand. Second half	20
981	Granville de Vigne; or, Held in Bondage. First half	20
981	Granville de Vigne; or, Held in Bondage. Second half	20
996	Idalia. First half	20
996	Idalia. Second half	20
1000	Puck. First half	20
1000	Puck. Second half	20
1003	Chandos. First half	20
1003	Chandos. Second half	20
1017	Tricotrin. 1st half	20
1017	Tricotrin. 2d half	20

James Payn's Works.

48	Thicker Than Water	20
186	The Canon's Ward	20
343	The Talk of the Town	20
577	In Peril and Privation	10
589	The Luck of the Darrells	20
823	The Heir of the Ages	20

Miss Jane Porter's Works.

660	The Scottish Chiefs. 1st half	20
660	The Scottish Chiefs. 2d half	20
696	Thaddeus of Warsaw	20

Cecil Power's Works.

336	Philistia	20
611	Babylon	20

Mrs. Campbell Praed's Works.

428	Zéro: A Story of Monte-Carlo	10
477	Affinities	10
811	The Head Station	20

Eleanor C. Price's Works.

173	The Foreigners	20
331	Gerald	20

Charles Reade's Works.

46	Very Hard Cash	20
98	A Woman-Hater	20
206	The Picture, and Jack of All Trades	10
210	Readiana: Comments on Current Events	10
213	A Terrible Temptation	20
214	Put Yourself in His Place	20
216	Foul Play	20
231	Griffith Gaunt; or, Jealousy	20
232	Love and Money; or, A Perilous Secret	10
235	"It is Never Too Late to Mend." A Matter-of-Fact Romance	20

Mrs. J. H. Riddell's Works.

71	A Struggle for Fame	20
593	Berna Boyle	20
1007	Miss Gascoigne	20

"Rita's" Works.

252	A Sinless Secret	10
446	Dame Durden	20
598	"Corinna." A Study	10
617	Like Dian's Kiss	20

F. W. Robinson's Works.

157	Milly's Hero	20
217	The Man She Cared For	20
261	A Fair Maid	20
455	Lazarus in London	20
590	The Courting of Mary Smith	20
1005	99 Dark Street	20

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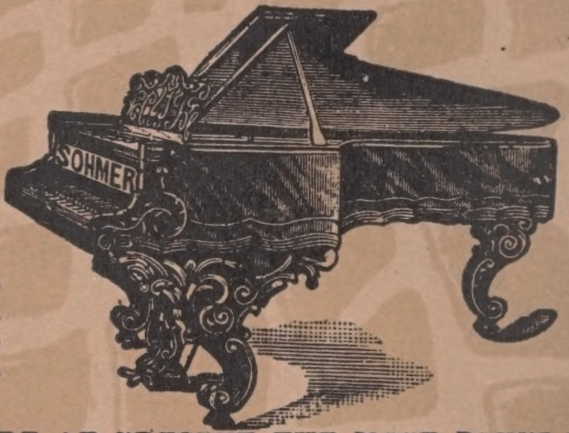

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